

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE SIXTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
IN AND FOR PINELLAS COUNTY, FLORIDA

Case Number: 2021-01513CF

STATE OF FLORIDA,

Plaintiff,

VS.

CORNELIUS TREVON WHITFIELD,

Defendant.

DEPOSITION OF:

JOHN DELUCA

TAKEN BY:

Counsel for the Defendant

DATE:

August 12, 2025

TIME:

10:20 a.m. - 10:52 a.m.

PLACE:

Pinellas Co. Justice Center
14250 49th Street - 1100-4
Clearwater, FL

REPORTED BY:

Tamara M. Pacheco, RPR
Notary Public, State of FL

Pages 1 - 34

JTP REPORTING (727)422-8287

APPEARANCES

THEODORA TAKTIKOS-DANZIG, ESQUIRE

TOM KOSKINAS, ESQUIRE

Assistant State Attorneys

14250 49th Street North

Clearwater, Florida 34620

Attorneys for the State of Florida

JULIA SEIFER-SMITH, ESQUIRE

LAMARK MCGREEN, ESQUIRE

Assistant Public Defenders

14250 49th Street North

Clearwater, Florida 34620

Attorneys for the Defendant

INDEX

PAGE:

Examination by Ms. Seifer-Smith.....	4
Certificate of Oath.....	32
Certificate of Reporter.....	33
Errata/Signature Page.....	34

EXHIBITS

(No exhibits were marked for identification.)

1 WHEREUPON,

2 JOHN DELUCA

3 (the deponent herein, being first duly sworn, was examined
4 and testified as follows:)

5 EXAMINATION

6 BY MS. SEIFER-SMITH:

7 Q. Can you please state your name for the record.

8 A. John DeLuca.

9 Q. Great. We're here in court case number
10 2101513CF. I have a St. Petersburg Police Department case
11 number of 2021-006023. Is that what you see in front of
12 you?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. All right. My name is Julia Seifer-Smith.
15 Together with Lamark McGreen, we're assistant public
16 defenders. We represent Mr. Cornelius Whitfield. And we
17 have two assistant state attorneys who are also present.

18 MS. TAKTIKOS-DANZIG: Theodora Danzig.

19 MR. KOSKINAS: Tom Koskinas.

20 Q (By Ms. Seifer-Smith) Can you tell me what, if
21 anything, you reviewed in connection with this case before
22 being sworn in by our court reporter?

23 A. So I'm a sergeant with the police department.
24 I've been working there for about twenty-three years. On
25 this day in question, I'm assigned to the SWAT Team as the

1 assistant commander. I've been on the team for almost
2 twenty years. In this incident, myself and Lieutenant
3 Haemmelmann, who is the commander of the team, ran the
4 call in reference to this homicide case.

5 Q. Okay.

6 A. So I have no -- I didn't do the investigation on
7 the case. I didn't interview Cornelius at all. I didn't
8 speak to him. I didn't put cuffs on him. I basically ran
9 the call, the SWAT portion. That's my involvement with
10 this part of the case.

11 Q. Okay. It's a death penalty case. I just need
12 to cross all my T's and dot all my I's.

13 A. Sure.

14 Q. I've got to talk to everybody. I see a report
15 in front of you. Did you have an opportunity to review it
16 before being sworn in?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. Did it jog your memory in terms of your
19 involvement in the case?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Was there anything else you reviewed before
22 being sworn in?

23 A. No.

24 Q. Okay. So like no body-worn camera? Nobody
25 else's reports? Nothing like that?

1 A. No, just my report.

2 Q. Do you feel like you need to review anything
3 else before we get into the meat and potatoes of things?

4 A. No, ma'am.

5 Q. So tell me a little bit about yourself in terms
6 of your professional development within the department.
7 You told me a little bit, twenty years and like your job
8 at the time, but what did you do before that?

9 A. I started at the police department about 2003.
10 I worked in the districts as a patrol officer. I
11 eventually went to the Street Crimes Unit, which is
12 street-level narcotics unit. Did that probably for two
13 different stints for a total of about four years. Then I
14 went to the Violent Crimes Task Force, which is in
15 conjunction with the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office and
16 St. Petersburg Police Department targeting violent
17 offenders. Did that for a year. Then I transferred to an
18 undercover surveillance unit, which is our SIU. Did that
19 for about seven years. Then I went to the street.

20 I was promoted as a new sergeant in 2018. After
21 being on the street for two years, then I got transferred
22 as a sergeant to the Narcotics Unit. I was in the
23 Narcotics Unit for five years until I went back to the
24 police department where I'm currently assigned to the
25 drones, in charge of the drones.

1 Q. Oh, that sounds fun.

2 A. It's riveting.

3 Q. Like no more human contact though. All machines
4 I guess.

5 A. Yeah. I get to speak to human beings. I don't
6 just hang out with the robots. I do speak to people that
7 fly the robots, but yes. Then I've been on the SWAT team
8 for -- in 2026, it will be twenty years. So I started in
9 a low-level position and worked my way up to assistant
10 commander. Is that what you're looking for?

11 Q. Yeah. No, no, no. That was helpful. So my
12 understanding is that when you're on SWAT, it's --
13 part-time is not really, I think, an appropriate way of
14 discussing it.

15 A. No, that's accurate.

16 Q. Okay.

17 A. It's not a full-time team. It's a part-time
18 team.

19 Q. Got it. So you can have any number of different
20 jobs within the department and still be on SWAT?

21 A. That's correct.

22 Q. Prior to February 16th of 2021, were you
23 involved in any other investigations regarding Cornelius
24 Whitfield?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Can you tell me about that?

2 A. That was on the narcotics side.

3 Q. Okay. Do you recall any kind of contact with
4 Mr. Whitfield or what those investigations entailed?

5 A. No contact with him. He was a fugitive that
6 was -- they had probable cause for his arrest related to I
7 believe a double homicide involving heavy drug overtones.
8 There was an apartment in St. Pete that there was some
9 individuals there probably being involved in narcotics
10 activity. He was fingered as the individual that shot and
11 killed one of these people, and another person I think
12 survived. So there was probable cause for his arrest.

13 He was tied down to a house, which is this same
14 house. I believe it's on Emerson Avenue where his family
15 lived. That's where he was being called up at, and
16 ourselves, narcotics, and surveillance units set up on
17 this house, tried to take him into custody.

18 Q. Were you involved in any of the investigation
19 that led to the development of probable cause in that
20 first case?

21 A. No.

22 Q. Okay. Do you know when you became involved for
23 surveillance purposes?

24 A. After they already had -- I think they already
25 had or was getting or had probable cause for his arrest.

1 I don't know the timeline. Enough that this is the guy
2 that did it, and we need to take him into custody. I just
3 don't remember those exact times.

4 Q. Do you remember, like, what you did in terms of
5 the surveillance?

6 A. My job was to oversee the undercover detectives
7 on the narcotics side, not the SIU side. So our job was
8 try to pin down his location, and then use any resources
9 on our side to try to take him into custody while the
10 surveillance unit, SIU was watching his residence and see
11 if he just appeared out of thin air and then just grab
12 him.

13 Q. What did your team do?

14 A. We used -- could I talk to the State for a
15 second? Because, like, there's some stuff that's
16 protected, and I don't want to say something that could
17 infringe on someone.

18 Q. Is it like an ongoing investigation type of
19 thing? Like, Mr. Whitfield has been in custody for
20 several years.

21 A. No, not on him.

22 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Okay. Sure. Talk to the
23 State.

24 THE DEPONENT: I want to answer your question
25 completely truthfully, but I just want to --

1 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: No, I appreciate that.

2 (Discussion held out of the depo room off the
3 record and the following resumed:)

4 A. Okay. We're good. Ask your question again.

5 Q. Okay. So what type of investigative methods
6 were you using? What's your team using at that time?

7 A. We were using a CI to establish his location,
8 firm up his location, and try to get him to reveal himself
9 so we could take him into custody.

10 Q. And because you were in narcotics, was this a
11 narcotics CI?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Was it somebody your team worked with
14 previously?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Okay. And I don't think I asked, who on your
17 team was working on this particular investigation with
18 you?

19 A. Like who was handling the CI?

20 Q. Generally, like, who was working on this
21 investigation, and then we'll get down to who was handling
22 the CI.

23 A. I mean, collectively as a group, the entire
24 Narcotics Unit was trying to assist Major Crimes/the
25 Homicide Unit in apprehending Cornelius. So like everyone

1 collectively was working together. Like, what pieces,
2 some people were doing research in different databases.
3 Some people were reaching out to CIs. Some people were
4 doing location gathering to see if his car was at a
5 different location or what other leads we had. Everyone
6 was doing a little piece of the puzzle of trying to take
7 him into custody.

8 Q. I don't have very many reports indicating what
9 kind of involvement your team had, so it would be really
10 helpful if I had names of people on your team.

11 A. Sure. The person that was handling the CI at
12 the time that was like our strongest lead that gave us any
13 chance of actually taking him into custody was Detective
14 Dominic Turt.

15 Q. How do you spell the last name?

16 A. T-U-R-T.

17 Q. Okay. And do you recall any other people that
18 had significant involvement in the investigation related
19 to Cornelius Whitfield?

20 A. No. That was legitimately our best possible
21 chance of taking him into custody.

22 Q. Did you work directly with Detective Turt?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Okay. So this confidential informant, are you
25 familiar with who that person is?

1 A. I never met them before.

2 Q. Was it somebody that either you, Detective Turt,
3 or somebody had been working with previous to this
4 investigation?

5 A. Yes, Detective Turt. He, I believe -- don't
6 quote me. Well, I'm being quoted. I believe he was the
7 handler. He oversaw this individual. I can't be a
8 hundred percent sure, but I'm fairly confident.

9 Q. Okay. It sounds like you didn't work with that
10 person directly, the CI?

11 A. That's correct. The sergeants really don't work
12 with the CIs. The detectives are the ones that handle the
13 CIs. We manage to make sure that they're being
14 compensated properly, everything is above board, rules are
15 followed. That's our job. Not to hang out and talk to
16 these guys. That's the detectives.

17 Q. How is it the CI came to your attention? Did
18 Turt come to you and say I think this person might be able
19 to get us to Whitfield?

20 A. This is me guessing. I honestly don't remember.
21 Usually, the way this kind of plays out -- this is kind of
22 like the broad way -- the CI reaches out to the detective
23 saying I have information, or vice-versa, detective
24 reaches out to CI. Do you know this person? Oh, yeah, I
25 know this person. Well, how do you know them, and where

1 do you know them? Can you tell us where you see them?
2 Those kinds of things. That's usually how the
3 conversation is back and forth, and then it's relayed to
4 us like, hey, I've got a lead.

5 Q. Is this person still a CI?

6 A. No.

7 Q. Okay. Why not?

8 A. They've passed away.

9 Q. Okay. Can you reveal to us who that person is?

10 A. I do not know their name. Even if I could, I
11 couldn't tell you because I don't know their name. We'd
12 have to probably go through -- there's probably some, I'm
13 sure, rules on how we reveal that, but I don't know that
14 method. I don't have that for you.

15 Q. Was there any -- well, I guess let's talk about
16 what the CI did in this investigation then, like what you
17 know of it. Because it sounds like Detective Turt was the
18 one who had direct contact with that person.

19 A. Yeah. You'd probably need to talk to him. All
20 I remember is that they could say that Cornelius was at
21 his family's house. That's why, like, most of the
22 surveillance was done there, that he would be there.

23 Q. So I just want to make sure I get this right.
24 So this person, this CI whose name you don't know had told
25 Detective Turt Cornelius is at his family's home at 2968

1 Emerson Avenue?

2 A. That's accurate.

3 Q. That's why the surveillance from SIU was there?

4 A. No. They were already doing surveillance -- I
5 believe they were already doing surveillance there to
6 begin with because it's a likely location. His entire
7 family lived there, so like that's a good place to start.

8 Q. Sure.

9 A. They probably were there before us, if I had to
10 guess. This was just more information, more leads on top
11 of what they were already doing, that he was most likely
12 there, and he was.

13 Q. Do you know if there was any kind of
14 documentation regarding the CI and the information that
15 was given?

16 A. I don't know.

17 Q. These are questions for Detective Turt?

18 A. Absolutely.

19 Q. Do you still work with Detective Turt?

20 A. Tangentially I guess because he's part of our
21 drone unit. He does fly drones for me. This is, again,
22 another part-time team. So I do run into him on occasion,
23 but I don't -- I'm not his direct supervisor for his
24 day-to-day operations.

25 Q. Okay. Were you aware of any additional

1 information that had come from the CI pertinent to this
2 investigation?

3 A. No.

4 Q. Any issues that you were aware of regarding the
5 CI? Any, like, investigative issues, like failing to
6 report back what they were supposed to, things like that?

7 A. No.

8 Q. Were there any other CIs that were used in this
9 investigation?

10 A. Not that I'm aware of.

11 Q. And because at the time you were in narcotics,
12 was there any attempt at making contact with Mr. Whitfield
13 to pursue, like, the purchase or sale of drugs?

14 A. No, absolutely not.

15 Q. And did -- well, it sounds like your team
16 communicated with SIU for the purpose of surveillance. Is
17 that right?

18 A. Well, when we got information we believed he was
19 there, yeah, we passed it on to SIU. That's about the
20 extent of it. They were --

21 Q. They were doing the actual surveillance?

22 A. Yeah.

23 Q. Okay. Any other information that you passed on
24 to SIU?

25 A. Me personally, no.

1 Q. Any other information that you were aware of
2 your team receiving regarding Mr. Whitfield?

3 A. On the narcotics side?

4 Q. Yeah.

5 A. Other than he killed people and he's dangerous
6 as hell, that's about it.

7 Q. Were you aware of any kind of communication that
8 had been had with his family by members of your
9 department?

10 A. I'm trying to remember. Yeah. So we were
11 informed that the Homicide Unit had spoken to his family;
12 and they had tried to work with them to give up his --
13 give up their relative, Cornelius, but they were adamant
14 that he wasn't there.

15 Q. It sounds like no specifics were given to you,
16 just kind of generally that contact had been made?

17 A. Yes, correct.

18 Q. In your work, was there anything else that was
19 done? Any database searching? Any, like, PIN warrants?
20 Any subpoenas that went out that your team did?

21 A. There was no PINS. We didn't do that. We
22 didn't do any subpoenas. Database searching, I'm sure
23 people looked in databases, like the ones we all have
24 access to.

25 Q. Would that kind of research have been documented

1 anywhere, like any reports written by yourself or
2 colleagues pursuant to that portion of the investigation?

3 A. Probably not on a routine basis, unless it
4 actually led to something. So like on this, I'm just
5 checking say the Florida Department of Motor Vehicles for
6 like driver license stuff. People aren't going to
7 document that unless that leads directly to an arrest or
8 some kind of significant lead.

9 Q. And it sounds like you didn't have any direct
10 contact with family members, friends, associates,
11 acquaintances of Mr. Whitfield?

12 A. No, other than the little girl in the house.
13 That's like my only, but I didn't talk to her.

14 Q. That was on the 16th, right?

15 A. Yeah. But talk to anybody, interview anybody,
16 get information like that on his whereabouts or his
17 apprehension, no, absolutely not.

18 Q. How about other members of your team prior to
19 the 16th, if you know?

20 A. No. No, I don't believe anybody talked to
21 anyone.

22 Q. Anything else that we haven't discussed
23 regarding like your and your team's involvement in the
24 investigation to like find Mr. Whitfield?

25 A. No, you hit all that.

1 Q. By the time February 16th rolled around, were
2 you all still engaged in any surveillance at the home?

3 A. So, I don't think so. Because the time this
4 happened, this was our SWAT week training. For a whole
5 week, we do training, and I was unplugged from narcotics.
6 I have no idea what they were doing.

7 Q. Tell me how you got involved on the 16th.

8 A. Well, I believe this might have been a Friday.
9 I think it was the last day of our training. We were down
10 at the K9 compound cleaning up. We were all down there,
11 our entire team, and someone came -- someone came up to
12 us -- I don't know who it was -- and was like, Hey, they
13 have a serious homicide case going on. Sounds like a
14 bunch of people are shot. We're like, Really?

15 So we turned on our radio to listen to the
16 district traffic, and that's when we got a call. I think
17 at the time he was a Major. Yeah, I think he called us
18 and said, You guys need to get up here. We've got an
19 active shooter on Emerson. So since we obviously were
20 there and had all our gear and everything was ready to go,
21 we drove up there quickly, arrived on scene.

22 Q. And you said you were the assistant commander.
23 Is that right?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Commander was Haemmelmann?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. So what did you do once you got there?

3 A. Set up a command post. Rallied up everyone that
4 we needed to to set up a perimeter. Put out our snipers.
5 We got our TSU, which is the Tactical Services Unit. They
6 run the all the robots, vehicles. Got them up and running
7 with the bearcats, which are armored vehicles, and then
8 our rook, which is an armored bobcat. You know what a
9 bobcat is?

10 Q. I do.

11 A. Okay, good. It's basically a bobcat with just a
12 bunch of armor on it protecting the person inside. We got
13 that piece of equipment up to the front of the house. And
14 then we got a rescue team led by Sergeant Brian Burton up
15 to the house to start trying to speak with anyone inside
16 and see what we could see. And then we got our drones up
17 in the air, and Kevin and I could see what was going on at
18 the house.

19 Q. About how long did that take to get everything
20 up and running?

21 A. I mean, we're guessing here. A couple of
22 minutes. Five minutes. We work pretty quick.

23 Q. Yeah, I guess you would have to.

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. While everything was being set up, did you hear

1 anything from the house, like any yelling? Any noises
2 coming from inside?

3 A. No, because Kevin and I are probably a block to
4 two blocks to the west. There's no way we can hear that.
5 only the guys on the ground could tell us.

6 Q. Did you hear anything from your colleagues who
7 were closer to the home that they'd heard anything from
8 the house?

9 A. Like speaking or talking or screaming or
10 yelling?

11 Q. Yes.

12 A. No. Just movement.

13 Q. Up to this point, it sounds like you didn't have
14 any kind of contact with anybody in the home or anybody
15 who had been in the home. Is that fair?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Okay. Did you receive any kind of information
18 from any colleagues who had any contact with folks?

19 A. The information we got -- we got like either in
20 route or on scene was that mother of the defendant was
21 able to escape after being shot, ran to a neighbor's
22 house. She said that Cornelius came in and shot everybody
23 and the dad and get the police here, like to that effect.
24 So we kind of had a rudimentary idea of, you know, what's
25 going on out there, and that our target we're looking for,

1 Cornelius Whitfield is inside the house armed with a
2 firearm and has just shot multiple people inside the
3 house. So we need to take care of this as quickly as
4 possible.

5 Q. Do you know who the information had been relayed
6 from, like who received that information directly from the
7 mother?

8 A. I have no idea.

9 Q. Okay. So you said it took a couple of minutes
10 to get your teams kind of up and running close to the
11 house.

12 A. Yeah.

13 Q. Were you giving them direction, or do they know
14 what to do?

15 A. Yeah. They know rudimentary what to do. We
16 have to establish a perimeter. We have to establish a
17 rescue team element. We have to get eyes on the property
18 and see what's going on and then you can make calls. They
19 have the ability, the team leader out there, Sergeant
20 Brian Burton to make calls by himself without me
21 instructing directly.

22 But myself and Kevin, we work closely together,
23 and we can make decisions. So if we need something
24 specific, we will. We asked the rook to rip out the front
25 of the house so we could see inside so we could find any

1 of the victims.

2 Q. Were you able to, like, observe yourself from
3 your location, or were you just using the drone?

4 A. Just the drone. We can't see -- him and I can't
5 see the house from where we are.

6 Q. Okay. And so you said it was at your direction
7 that the wall was ripped out of the home?

8 A. Not me. Kevin said that over the radio.

9 Q. I see. And that was done?

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. And were you being updated, like, over the
12 radio, or were you just watching from the drone in terms
13 of what happened next?

14 A. Both.

15 Q. So tell me what happened next after? What was
16 ripped out?

17 A. So we ripped out the front of the wall of the
18 house, and at the time, the rook driver, which is
19 Detective Schwartz -- I forget what his first name is off
20 the top of my head, sorry. He ripped it out, and we're
21 asking for any live victims. He's looking inside, and
22 he's not seeing anything. Our snipers are indicating to
23 us they're seeing movement from windows, doors on the --
24 it should be on west side of the property opening and
25 shutting. So there's some kind of movement inside the

1 property, so somebody is in there.

2 This is kind of playing out very quickly. We
3 send the rook to the west side of the house and rip that
4 part out. Maybe that's where he is trying to escape or
5 maybe pin him down to grab him. At that point, we're
6 making sure the bearcats, the driver, and the co-pilot
7 inside are giving commands to the house that if anyone is
8 inside, please present yourself and give up peacefully.
9 while that's taking place, the guys on the ground are
10 saying there's someone coming out from inside the house,
11 could be our target, Cornelius.

12 Q. Okay. So possibly responding to the directions
13 that are being given?

14 A. Yes, it's possible. I don't know if he heard it
15 but possible.

16 Q. Were you actually able to see this happen on the
17 drone footage?

18 A. Oh, yeah.

19 Q. So tell me what you saw happen then. Did you
20 see somebody come out of the house?

21 A. Yeah, Cornelius.

22 Q. Can you describe that to me?

23 A. So Cornelius comes out of the house from all the
24 rubble. He has his hands up in the air. He's wearing no
25 shirt. I don't know what the bottoms are, if they're

1 shorts or pants. I'm not sure. He's wearing a COVID
2 mask. I think it's black.

3 He comes out, and he's complying with commands
4 and coming out to the team that's at the bearcat. He lays
5 down. They handcuff him. They arrest him. They check
6 him. They confirm, yes, this is Cornelius, we have our
7 target arrested, send the secondary rescue team. So we
8 sent up two teams. We had a team at the front and a team
9 at the back of the house. The second team starts to go
10 inside the house to look for victims.

11 Q. Okay. And were you getting updates from that
12 team?

13 A. Yes. So the first thing they said once they got
14 inside the house was that it's tough to move through here
15 because there's so much debris. It's almost like a horder
16 house in there. There's a lot of stuff in the house.

17 I guess they encountered the victims because
18 they said get rescue up here immediately. They didn't
19 describe the condition or where they found them, but
20 enough that we need rescue up here immediately. So,
21 obviously, we sent rescue up.

22 Myself and Kevin went to the house, and that's
23 when they found, I guess, the little girl that was inside.
24 I guess she's two or three years old. She's pretty young.
25 We had to pass her up to the exit of the house because

1 there's so much stuff everywhere, like enough it would be
2 difficult for her to walk by herself. So we passed her up
3 to the front, eventually to me, and then I ran her out to
4 rescue. She looked like she was in good condition. She
5 didn't look like she was injured, at least that I could
6 tell outside of her body. I passed her off to rescue to
7 get checked out.

8 Q. Did you hear her say anything while she was with
9 you?

10 A. No. She was quiet.

11 Q. And you said she did not appear injured?

12 A. That's correct.

13 Q. Did you see anything on her that you thought
14 might be pertinent to the case, like any blood, any other
15 kind of fluids or gunshot residue?

16 A. On her?

17 Q. On her.

18 A. The girl?

19 Q. The girl, yeah.

20 A. No, but I wasn't really looking for that. But
21 not obvious where she was like a horror scene where she's
22 covered in blood.

23 Q. Not a Dexter.

24 A. No. It was not like that that I could tell.

25 Q. Okay. And you said she had been handed out by

1 multiple people?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Kind of like a chain?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Do you know who you handed her to?

6 A. The specific medic, I do not.

7 Q. But it was an EMT or paramedic?

8 A. Yeah. It's either fire rescue, Sunstar, one of
9 them. I don't remember. Maybe you might be able to see
10 it on the drone footage.

11 Q. Okay. When you had received her, were you
12 actually in the home in order to get her, or were you
13 still kind of outside?

14 A. I was standing right outside the front of the
15 house, which is now caved in from the roof. So right at
16 the edge. I didn't have to physically walk inside the
17 house. I was right on the outside of where all the debris
18 is, and then I could -- I think it says -- I think it's
19 Detective Hudson hands this little girl to me. Yeah,
20 Detective Hudson. He hands her to me.

21 Q. Did you ever go into the home?

22 A. No.

23 Q. Did you arrive at the home after Mr. Whitfield
24 was already taken into custody?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Was he still on scene there, or had he been
2 removed from the scene when you arrived?

3 A. You know, I don't know. I wasn't really focused
4 on him. I knew he was in custody, and he was handcuffed
5 in a manner that he could present no more threat to us.
6 So, like, if he got into a vehicle or not, like that
7 wasn't my main concern. Once he's secured by the team,
8 we're looking for victims now.

9 Q. Did you have any kind of contact with him that
10 day?

11 A. No.

12 Q. When he was taken back to the station, did you
13 ever go back to the station and see him there for any
14 interviews or anything like that?

15 A. No. I did not go to the police station after we
16 were done.

17 Q. Did you do anything else on scene?

18 A. No.

19 Q. Did you participate in any debriefs?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Can you tell me about that?

22 A. So after every operation with the SWAT Team, we
23 do a debrief. I'm fairly confident we did the debrief not
24 at the scene because we were probably very busy. We
25 probably went back to our training building, and we just

1 talk about why we're out there, what we were doing, what
2 did people see, what did you see, why did you do this, how
3 did this play out.

4 Just like the questions you were asking, I can't
5 hear and see everything that's occurring at the ground
6 level. I can just see where the drone is and whatever
7 they communicate over the radio. So we get a little more
8 insight into what people actually meant by what they said
9 over the radio and what they were doing.

10 Q. Was the debrief the same day?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Is that typical?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Okay. Would it have been done prior to like
15 writing your report?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Is it just a SWAT debrief, or does anybody from
18 Major Crimes participate in that?

19 A. Just SWAT. Nobody else.

20 Q. Okay. And were there any kind of like questions
21 or concerns regarding what was done by your team? Were
22 there any mistakes or things that you thought that could
23 have been improved upon?

24 A. No. They did a fantastic job.

25 Q. And was there any kind of further debrief after

1 this particular incident? This was obviously like a
2 pretty chaotic and very distressing incident. Were there
3 any folks who had some concerns about what had occurred?

4 A. No. No one that came to me, but I always reach
5 out to our guys and see because, like, you're exactly
6 right. To see people that are murdered is hopefully not
7 common. It's hard to look at. I always reach out to them
8 and say, Okay, how you doing? Are you feeling okay?
9 That's more I would say person-to-person. It's not in a
10 professional setting. I'm not coming to you as a sergeant
11 in the police department. I'm coming to you as a friend
12 to see how they're doing.

13 Q. And it sounds like you don't recollect anybody
14 having a particularly hard time with this one?

15 A. Not that I know of because no one has come to
16 say they want specific help or they want to go out hang
17 out and discuss this.

18 Q. And the SWAT Team draws from, like, members of
19 the department like throughout every unit. Is that fair?

20 A. Yes. So when we have tryouts, the only -- one
21 of the few minimum standards is that they're off
22 probation. So they can come from any position in the
23 police department. Like you said, detectives, patrol
24 officers.

25 Q. Is that true in terms of the make up of the SWAT

1 Team at that time? It was people from throughout the
2 department?

3 A. That's correct.

4 Q. I don't think I have any further questions. Was
5 there anything else we haven't discussed in terms of your
6 involvement in the case that is important or relevant?

7 A. No.

8 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Mr. McGreen, any questions?

9 MR. MCGREEN: None from me.

10 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: State.

11 MR. KOSKINAS: That's it. Thanks for coming in.
12 Read.

13 BY MS. SEIFER-SMITH

14 Q. Have you understood all the questions you've
15 been asked today?

16 A. Yes. That's the first time someone has ever
17 asked that.

18 Q. Have you had an opportunity to answer everything
19 fully and completely?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Anything that you wish to add or change
22 regarding the testimony that you've given?

23 A. No, ma'am.

24 Q. If you leave, something occurs to you that you
25 might have left out from our conversation today, like a

1 conversation with a colleague, review of something else
2 that you didn't take a look at before coming in today and
3 you feel as though you need to reopen the conversation or
4 let us know that there's something in addition, would you
5 please reach out to either my office or to the State to
6 let us know?

7 A. Sure.

8 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: At this point, I'll conclude
9 the deposition, and I will reserve your right to read if
10 you wish.

11 THE DEPONENT: what is it again?

12 MR. KOSKINAS: Read.

13 (Deposition concludes at 10:52 a.m.)
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

1 COUNTY OF PINELLAS)

2 STATE OF FLORIDA)

3 CERTIFICATE OF OATH

4
5 I, the undersigned authority, certify that JOHN
6 DELUCA personally appeared before me and was duly sworn.

7 witness my hand and official seal this 30TH day of
8 OCTOBER, 2025.

9
10 *Tamara M. Pacheco*

11 Tamara M. Pacheco, RPR
12 COMMISSION # 474485
13 EXPIRES: March 30, 2028
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

1 CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

2 STATE OF FLORIDA)

3 COUNTY OF PINELLAS)
4

5 I, Tamara M. Pacheco, certify that I was authorized
6 to and did stenographically report the Deposition of JOHN
7 DELUCA; that a review of the transcript was requested; and
8 that the transcript is a true and complete record of my
9 stenographic notes.

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

15 *Tamara M. Pacheco*16 Tamara M. Pacheco, RPR
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

ERRATA SHEET

IN THE CASE OF: STATE OF FL v. CORNELIUS WHITFIELD

NAME OF DEPONENT: JOHN DELUCA

CASE NUMBER: 21-01513CFANO

Please read the transcript of your deposition. If you feel you need to make corrections, please note on this page. DO NOT mark on the transcript itself.
Sign and date the transcript below.

PAGE	LINE	ERROR/AMENDMENT	REASON FOR CHANGE
------	------	-----------------	-------------------

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Signature

Date