

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:

RICHARD MCKEE

TAKEN BY:

Counsel for the Defendant

DATE:

August 12, 2025

TIME:

11:01 a.m. - 11:13 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 - 17

JTP REPORTING (727)422-8287

APPEARANCES

THEODORA TAKTIKOS-DANZIG, 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.....	15
Certificate of Reporter.....	16
Errata/Signature Page.....	17

EXHIBITS

(No exhibits were marked for identification.)

1 WHEREUPON,

2 RICHARD MCKEE

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. Richard L. McKee, M-C-K-E-E.

9 Q. We are here in the matter of Cornelius
10 Whitfield. Our court case number is 21-01513CF. My name
11 is Julia Seifer-Smith. I'm an assistant public defender.
12 Together with Lamark McGreen, we represent Mr. Whitfield.
13 Present for the state is Theodora Danzig.

14 I guess it's Mr. McKee now that you're retired.

15 A. Yeah, or Rich. Either way.

16 Q. Or Rich. We showed you a copy of your report
17 just before being sworn in by the court reporter. Did
18 that jog your memory as to your involvement in the case?

19 A. Well, I mean --

20 Q. Vaguely?

21 A. Oh, I remember this.

22 Q. Oh, you remember?

23 A. Yeah.

24 Q. Separate from the report?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Okay. Since we've not met before, do you mind
2 giving me a little bit of information about your history
3 with the department?

4 A. With the department. Okay. Hired in '91. Did
5 thirty-two years. Held positions as a field training
6 officer for five years, SWAT Team five years. I was
7 undercover narcotics for twelve-and-a-half years. I was
8 on the SERT Team and did all of their equipment. SERT is
9 the Special Event Response Team. Hostage negotiator.
10 Probably a couple other ancillary duties.

11 Q. So it would have been easier to ask what you
12 didn't do.

13 A. Yeah. It was pretty cool.

14 Q. Can you tell me how you got involved in this
15 case.

16 A. It was at the end of my shift, if I recall. I
17 don't know the exact time on there. I can look at it. I
18 was first to arrive on scene. I was on my way home and
19 just blocks away. I was passing by when the call came in.

20 Q. During this time, what was your job at the
21 department?

22 A. I was in patrol, uniformed.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. So I swung down to the location, spoke to a
25 lady. It was a shots -- person shot call. I went to the

1 address. There were people in the front yard, and I
2 talked to a lady who had been shot in the arm and asked
3 what happened. She indicated a house down the street that
4 was on the corner and that basically her son had shot this
5 lady's grandmother, mother, and the lady's daughter, which
6 I think was the guy's sister.

7 Q. Was this a woman that you ever had any contact
8 with previously?

9 A. No. Not that I remember ever.

10 Q. Was that neighborhood familiar to you?

11 A. Yeah, I knew it. It wasn't my assigned zone,
12 but yeah, I was familiar with most of the neighborhoods in
13 the city.

14 Q. Was that particular neighborhood on your radar
15 just before this event? Like, did you know about any kind
16 of investigation or surveillance that had been happening
17 there?

18 A. No, nothing. Nothing I was involved in.

19 Q. So this woman that you spoke to, you said that
20 you encountered her in the front yard of the residence?

21 A. Correct. Wherever the call -- wherever the call
22 was dispatched to. I don't remember exact address.

23 Q. And you said you were the first person from your
24 department to arrive. Is that right?

25 A. Correct.

1 Q. Okay. So you were the first person to speak to
2 these folks?

3 A. Correct.

4 Q. Was it just the woman who had been shot that you
5 spoke with, or did you talk to the other people around
6 her?

7 A. There were several other people. Everybody was
8 talking. I was focused on her because she was injured.
9 She was actually part of what had happened, so I could get
10 the most information from her.

11 Q. Did she require medical attention?

12 A. I called rescue. She indicated she was shot in
13 the arm.

14 Q. Okay. But you didn't provide any kind of
15 medical attention yourself?

16 A. Correct.

17 Q. Did she appear to be in pain?

18 A. More shock I would think. I'm sure it didn't
19 feel good.

20 Q. Was she able to respond to your questions?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. And what did you ask her?

23 A. Well, basically what happened. She indicated,
24 again, that her family members had been shot by her son
25 and where he was, what had happened, things like that so I

1 could direct others to where the location was where other
2 persons were that she indicated had been shot.

3 Q. Did she give an address, or did she just point
4 towards where the home was?

5 A. I believe she did both because it was only -- it
6 was less than a block away.

7 Q. Did she give you the name of her son?

8 A. I think she said his name and my son.

9 Q. I see in your report in the second paragraph,
10 there are several phrases that are in quotes. Can you
11 tell me when you use quotes?

12 A. When it's meant to show exact wording of what a
13 person tells me.

14 Q. So what I see is, you write, "when asked who had
15 done this, she replied, 'It was Cornelius Whitfield'," end
16 quote, and then, in quotes, "my son."

17 A. Correct.

18 Q. So those would have been the direct words that
19 you heard from her?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Okay. Was there anything else that you thought
22 was particularly important that she had told you?

23 A. Well, yeah. I mean, she said three other
24 persons were shot, so I relayed that to dispatch. Of
25 course, multiple units come. I was trying to direct where

1 to block intersections of roadways to keep vehicular
2 traffic from going. Because if the person was still
3 there, didn't put anybody passing by the house, potential
4 risk. That's about it.

5 Q. Your communications with dispatch, is that via
6 radio?

7 A. Correct.

8 Q. Okay. While you were at this particular
9 location with this young lady, was there any other
10 colleague of yours that arrived?

11 A. Oh, multiple units started arriving within a few
12 minutes.

13 Q. Anybody else who was a part of the conversation
14 you were having with her?

15 A. At that point, no, I was the only one there.

16 Q. And you said that you were directing people to
17 kind of at least halt traffic or stop traffic. Is that
18 right?

19 A. Set up a perimeter. Prevent vehicular and foot
20 traffic from going by the location. If the shooter was
21 still in there, it could put them in danger.

22 Q. Did you ever go towards the location that was
23 pointed out to you?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Tell me about that.

1 A. I just -- I went near to the house to try to get
2 a little more intel or see if I could hear anything. I
3 didn't go up to the house though.

4 Q. Did you observe anything when you went closer to
5 the home?

6 A. Pertaining to the crime, no.

7 Q. Did you hear anything coming from the home?

8 A. No.

9 Q. Okay. What else did you observe? Like,
10 anything coming from like your department? You said there
11 were a number of officers that arrived.

12 A. Yeah. After multiple units arrived, of course
13 there was an on-scene commander, and I think I was put on
14 a perimeter blocking point at an intersection just to
15 keep, you know, persons from entering closer to the house.

16 Q. When you were on a blocking point, did you have
17 any contact with civilians?

18 A. Multiple people would come up, just curious
19 what's going on. Nothing -- no one with any information
20 concerning the crime.

21 Q. Any contact with family members?

22 A. Other than the lady shot?

23 Q. Yeah, other than the person shot.

24 A. Gosh, there may have been some family come up.
25 I don't remember if there was or not.

1 Q. Any further involvement in the investigation?

2 A. No. I know I stayed there until relieved. I
3 don't know how long that was. That was a while.

4 Q. Were you asked to do anything else?

5 A. If it's not in the report -- sometimes they have
6 us go door-to-door and see if anyone is home, but if I
7 didn't put a list of houses, then I didn't do that.

8 Q. I don't see a list. And it sounds like you
9 don't recall doing a canvass?

10 A. No.

11 Q. Was the name Cornelius Whitfield familiar to you
12 for any reason?

13 A. No.

14 Q. So as far as you know, no involvement with other
15 cases of his or anything like that?

16 A. Not that I remember, no.

17 Q. How about the name Rodney Green or Deronrick
18 Green?

19 A. Sorry.

20 Q. Not familiar?

21 A. (Shakes head.)

22 Q. No?

23 A. No.

24 Q. Okay. And besides your contact with Ms. Harila
25 in the front yard of the neighbor's home, did you have any

1 further contact with her?

2 A. No. I think once units started arriving and
3 then rescue got there, then, you know, I let them do
4 their -- whatever rescue does.

5 Q. And it sounds like you didn't really stick
6 around to watch them do their job?

7 A. Rescue, no.

8 Q. Did you participate in any debriefs with any
9 other officers or detectives?

10 A. Like initial at the station debrief or just talk
11 to guys about it?

12 Q. Either.

13 A. Well, of course we talk about it. You know, I
14 go over there, you know, direct people at first, but once
15 the lieutenants and majors and assistant chiefs and
16 everybody else starts showing up, I just kind of step to
17 the back.

18 Q. Did you learn anything from any of your
19 colleagues about the investigation? Like, did they tell
20 you any of their observations or what they believed
21 happened? Anything like that?

22 A. No.

23 Q. Did you ever speak with any of the detectives
24 about what they uncovered in their investigation?

25 A. What they uncovered? No. I believe that I

1 talked to some people initially at the scene on what was
2 said, but who that was, I couldn't even guess I talked to
3 a homicide detective or not or who it was.

4 Q. When you say "what was said," do you mean
5 passing on the information you received from the mother?

6 A. Correct.

7 Q. And it sounds like you don't recall now who the
8 detective would have been?

9 A. Correct, if it was a detective. I know I talked
10 to several people telling them what had happened, but that
11 was usually detectives or people above my paygrade. So,
12 you know, just wanting to know -- get as much information
13 as possible.

14 Q. Okay. Anything else that you think is important
15 or relevant that we haven't had an opportunity to discuss
16 this morning?

17 A. No, ma'am.

18 Q. Did you follow the case at all, like, through
19 the court system or anything like that?

20 A. No.

21 Q. And when did you retire?

22 A. February last year. February 10th at 4 o'clock.

23 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Perfect. Mr. McGreen, any
24 questions?

25 MR. MCGREEN: No questions.

1 THE DEPONENT: After thirty-two years.

2 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: Ms. Danzig, any questions?

3 MS. TAKTIKOS-DANZIG: None from me.

4 MS. SEIFER-SMITH: I will conclude this
5 deposition and reserve your right to read. Thank you very
6 much.

7 (Deposition concludes at 11:13 a.m.)

8

9

10

11

12

13

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 RICHARD
6 MCKEE 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
7 RICHARD MCKEE; that a review of the transcript was
8 requested; and that the transcript is a true and complete
9 record of my 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: RICHARD MCKEE

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 run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Signature

Date