



COJ 60 - More Drama Surrounding Becky Hill Case + Alex Murdaugh's Money Trail Heats Up

Mandy Matney 00:03

Hello and happy Tuesday!. 'Tis the season for holiday parties. Last week we invited Premium members to toast, "Cups up," to the holidays and a gathering on Hilton Head. So we hope to see y'all there. Check your emails and the Premium feed for more information on how to attend. For those who aren't yet members of our Premium platform you can join at lunashark.supercast.com. While we're on the topic of get togethers in the new year, we will be bringing some of the LunaShark fun closer to you. We are now taking suggestions from listeners on where you would like us to go in 2024. To submit a suggestion for our 2024 event schedule go to lunasharkmedia.com/newevents, that is lunasharkmedia.com/newevents. This week, Eric Bland and his law partner Ronnie Richter will be hosting our next Happy Hour at 7PM December 21st. This is a reminder to Soak up the Sun Premium Members to check your email and your feed for the links to that. It'll be a lot of fun. Lastly, our annual membership drive starts in January. So stay tuned for more live hearings, live events and more. Now, as for today's episode, I feel like I need to warn you that we are getting a little spicy, spicier than usual that is. We recorded our conversation first thing in the morning so we were ready to roll. We started off our discussion by quickly discussing the behind-the-scenes drama that's been going on between a TikToker and Becky Hill. Ordinarily, we wouldn't spend any time acknowledging this type of silliness, at least not to this extent. But the accusation that this TikToker continues to lob at Becky and at us are dangerous and frankly fit very nicely into Dick and Jim's plan to get Alex a new trial so we feel like we have to at least correct the record on some things. More importantly though, on this episode we talk about the latest in Becky's case, the apparent break in getting answers to the question of where did Alex hide his money and depositions - why we love them as journalists and how we get our hands on them. So let's get into it.

Liz Farrell 02:33

Cups up guys!

Mandy Matney 02:34

Good morning!



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Eric Bland 02:34

Cups up my friends.

Mandy Matney 02:35

I got my *Factor*.

Liz Farrell 02:36

Oh my God.

Eric Bland 02:39

Juicing! Good morning juice.

Mandy Matney 02:41

These are really good. I am not saying that because they sponsor this podcast, but they are fantastic.

Liz Farrell 02:51

Oh my God, Eric, they're so good. And they saved my butt this week because I'm not in a cooking mood and I needed that. So it's been a crazy week, huh?

Mandy Matney 03:03

This is all I've been like eating because I've been so stressed and busy and crazy. Yeah, it was one of those Yeah, surreal, like...

Eric Bland 03:13

Busy on what? Busy on what Mandy? You're just a one trick pony. All you have is Murdaugh and your whole career is over with when Murdaugh is done.

Mandy Matney 03:19

I know and I'm just clinging to relevancy. And clinging to Murdaugh.

Liz Farrell 03:25

Is that what what's her face said?



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Eric Bland 03:26

Yeah, I just listened to it. And it was for an hour. And, you know, I gave her the courtesy of listening to it because somebody sent it to me. Neal sent it, Neal sent it to me and I'm not going to dissect it, but it's a "wow". Major well that somebody would go for an hour. It tells me that she had some concerns about what she has said and the grievance that was filed by Neil. I mean, she only mentioned your name once Liz, but she took off on Mandy and me as much as she could. You know, we're biased, and we don't have any empathy and she has empathy. You know, we've been biased on Alex from day one. And we've admitted that but too...

Liz Farrell 04:07

Glady. Proudly.

Mandy Matney 04:09

We don't have empathy for Alex? Who has empathy for Alex? Psychopaths do.

Eric Bland 04:13

She said that our listeners, you know, are the same way that we are, so they can't see there's two sides of a coin, and we only see one side of it. And then the other thing is, you know, she belittled me saying I only had one murder case and it was PCRd, or one criminal case. I've actually had about 15 and everybody who tries a murder case knows if you lose a murder case - and I actually tried it with Greg Harris, a former prosecutor, if you lose it, they PCR you all the time and you want you want your client to PCR you to get an opportunity. But she also said that I don't know what full contact means that I defamed her that when I said it was a full contact argument between her and Neil. I think everybody understands when you use the word full contact argument it just means a robust argument. She insinuated or she said that I insinuated that they got in a fistfight. So that was a little...

Mandy Matney 05:02

You've been using that term for a really long time.



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Eric Bland 05:04

Does anybody not know what I mean when I say it's a full contact argument or full contact discussion?

Mandy Matney 05:11

No, you know you've been saying that. And you said - there was a really funny quote in like the early days of MMP when you said, "This is gonna be a full contact litigation and everybody's got to wear pants." Big boy pants or whatever.

Eric Bland 05:29

You can't wear shorts.

Mandy Matney 05:30

You can't wear shorts, that was it!

Eric Bland 05:34

But you know, we are not hypocritical. She said that, you know, here we are making money on our podcast and we blast her because we called her TikTok Lori, but she had a four-page list of grievances and it's just an hour of my life I won't get back. But that's all I want to say about it. I gave her the courtesy.

Liz Farrell 05:50

I can't believe you watched it Eric.

Mandy Matney 05:51

Yeah, I couldn't do that.

Liz Farrell 05:54

We need to make money because journalism costs money and I'm not gonna apologize for that in any way shape or form. That's you know, it's gotta be funded. FOIAs are expensive and time is expensive. You're going to tell me that she's going to lawyer for free? I mean, she probably takes some pro bono clients, but does she do her main profession for free? This is our main profession. This is what we do for a living so get real.



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Eric Bland 06:19

She complimented you on your work at FitsNews, that you broke a lot of stories, Mandy, but then you gave up being a journalist and became just a podcaster. And now you're just an unempathetic, mean woman who uses gross terms and evil terms.

Mandy Matney 06:38

Awww. Well something...

Liz Farrell 06:42

I'm sorry. This is so stupid.

Mandy Matney 06:45

It is so stupid. But I just want to say this one thing and then we're gonna move on. I've been thinking about what she said about making money and, you know, that we're just crawling, scraping for relevancy and all these things that are untrue. We do make money, that's a fact like Liz said. What we do costs a lot of money and we have really great skills that should be paid for appropriately and fact checking is one of them. And the reason why we make money on our podcasts and sorry TikTok Lori probably doesn't make a lot of money is because we fact check and we verify things and we have actual real reporting that takes time and sponsors will pay for that. What they won't pay for is profanity, BS of some woman just saying that Becky Hill's the worst ever. That doesn't help society and then with lots of lies on top of it. But I also want to say this, she should thank us because her relevancy is because of the two years that we did before...we did so much work to get the entire Murdaugh story into the limelight in the way that it did and Liz and I deserve every frickin' penny for that. And what bothers me so much is all these people now who are saying that we are just wanting relevancy and we are wanting this Murdaugh thing to go on forever. Things that are not true at all, because we know how to get other stories. We know how to do the next Murdaugh, we can do that. If we just have time.



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Eric Bland 08:20

She claims she does. She claims that, you know, only a third of her stories are Murdaugh. She says she's done Murdaugh from day one so don't think you have ownership of it, Mandy. She's done it from day one.

Mandy Matney 08:30

What is day one? Day one? When's day one, 2021.

Eric Bland 08:36

Day one.

Liz Farrell 08:38

Day one. Yeah, what's day one? Let's hear that one.

Mandy Matney 08:40

If she doesn't have a TikTok in 2019 or before 2021 then I do not want to hear anything about day one. The hard work happened before June 2021. The hard, terrifying, thankless work that Liz and I and Teresa Moss did - that was when it was really hard. She popped on Tiktok when it was easy, and it was popular and everybody was already talking about it because we had done the legwork to put all the strings together to make it interesting. And that's all I want to say about that.

Liz Farrell 09:15

And when she says...like, can I just clarify what legwork means here? She was doing it at a time when everyone was saying that the Murdaugh's were bad or that the Murdaugh's were up to no good. We were doing it at a time when we were constantly told, "Leave the Murdaughs alone. Yeah, they're this or yeah, they're that, but that's just the way it is." So we had to break through and like get to a point with people where they trusted us to be able to tell us the things that they would only tell each other basically. So I don't want to hear, like she comes in - now I'm getting mad.

Mandy Matney 09:44

And good journalism is why people listen to us. And Eric, did you happen to listen to the podcast this week?



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Eric Bland 09:50

I did. You guys talk about a lot of different things. We don't talk about Murdaugh. I'm going to talk about my murder case. Today we're going to talk about other things. We're going to talk about, you know, how do you find assets? Our job is to educate people. We have to cater to our audience. You know, our audience does want to hear about Murdaugh. If I'm going to sit here and talk about basketball, when our audience wants to be educated on Murdaugh because it's not over yet, I'm not apologizing for that. We are trying to educate our audience on what they want to hear and then also, as this show progresses, on all legal issues. And if you follow what people say about our show, what they constantly say is, "Thank you so much for educating us on the legal system, on what our legal rights are and what we can do. How we can be heard, what should we ask of our lawyers." Most people don't even understand how a trial works. And so they thank us, not just for the Murdaugh content, but actually educating and that's what we feel like our role is here, or at least that's what I feel like my role is.

Mandy Matney 10:56

Right, and I've said this before, and I'll say it again, I would much rather have 100,000 educated listeners who are there for the truth, who are there for the journalism, who are there for the education on the law, who are asking good questions. I would much rather have 100,000 of those people versus a million people who are just there for mean girl talk and are just there for entertainment. And people like there's a lot of, especially early on, I had a lot of people email me, you know about the typical things, my voice, how I'm awful, blah, blah, blah. And my reaction, that I didn't say back to them was just like, I don't want you. We're building something here. And I want a specific type of listener. I want a listener who's empathetic. I want to listen or who does not care to message me that my voice sounded terrible that day, or does not...

Eric Bland 11:52

She hammered you on your voice again. She said you can't speak, but you've obviously had a voice coach since you started.

Liz Farrell 12:00

I'm the one who had a voice coach, first of all. Let's get it straight.



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Eric Bland 12:05

I think you guys speak great.

Mandy Matney 12:07

Right, exactly. It's really training. I mean, and even in the last couple months, when I've done a lot more interviews, and I've talked to a lot more people in person, like I'm catching myself getting better at speaking and I'm catching myself getting less nervous. And it's just the way that it is, you just get used to it.

Eric Bland 12:26

Home run on MSNBC last Sunday, by the way.

Mandy Matney 12:29

Oh, thank you. And I did talk fast then.

Eric Bland 12:32

And I blame David for the technical difficulties. Andre 3000.

Mandy Matney 12:36

It was not David's fault. Oh my gosh. I didn't even tell you this Liz. It was Skype. And you know, we were like, "Okay, I guess we're just gonna wait on the Skype thing and then be live on NBC," which is weird. And it was fine. The feed was fine for an hour. I was watching the show for an hour. And then right when they said, "Introducing Mandy Matney," it went completely blank. It went like, "eeeehhhh". And, of course, we both kind of panicked, and...

Eric Bland 13:10

Four minutes and fifty-three seconds. It was great.

Mandy Matney 13:14

It was so ridiculous though, because it was like everything with the feed was completely fine until the second that they introduced me. And then it just went completely blank. So I was a little frazzled...and. But yeah, I just need to make myself do that more because when you talk, you just get better at it. And when you get



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used to responding to questions that throw you off, you get better at that. And it's just a way of learning.

Eric Bland 13:41

You covered a lot of territory. Stephen Smith, you said we are dedicating 2024 to Stephen Smith. We will bring it home. I mean, you hit Murdaugh, you hit so many different things, your book, a lot. And that's what you got to learn when, you know - I've had to improve because you know you only have about two minutes and you want to get something out and you've got to do it in a clippy quick way. And you have to be able to pivot if they want to pivot and you did a great job.

Mandy Matney 14:07

Thank you!

Liz Farrell 14:07

Eric, the reason Mandy was asking you if you listened to *True Sunlight* was because this week we got to break a little news on the podcast, which is always fun. And it's something that was a long time coming for us because almost from the very start this person's name was being floated to us, you know, sort of peripherally at first and then more specifically as time went on. That this could be somebody who holds the keys to where Alec hid his millions of stolen client money. So, we were super excited to be able to do this episode when we found out that he - his name's Peter J. Strauss, he's a lawyer on Hilton Head. He is known as sort of a global, I guess expert of sorts in what's called the captive insurance business. And I got a crash course in captive insurance this week from somebody who was really helpful and explaining what it is and what it isn't, and how it can be abused and all of that. So Eric, do you want to talk about what captive insurance is? Or do you want, I mean, just to understand that, like what this guy was doing for his business. And it was very lucrative, he was making a lot of money at it. And you know, you can, it's a tax shelter that can easily be abused.

Eric Bland 15:19

Right. People do these over in the islands where they form these companies and they become basically their own insurance company. They fund their own - they



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become self-insured. A lot of professional athletes have tried to do this overseas where they basically insure themselves. I had a case involving a bar and the bar owner himself had a captive insurance and he was self-insured. And it's a way of putting money overseas so that you avoid United States taxation. You can get money out as a consultant and it's under the captive insurance where you don't pay tax on that money. And the IRS has been looking at this for many, many years. And it's just, it takes somebody who's very sophisticated in understanding how to structure it. And it's very difficult to employ that you don't violate the rules.

Liz Farrell 16:09

Right, and so one of the things that I found out was that South Carolina is actually one of the top states in the nation, has a very sophisticated insurance industry, but specifically, one of the top places for captive insurance policies or companies. And that the IRS has been cracking down. Like the way it was originally described to me in 2022 is like, if you took out a policy, if you put a million dollars into a policy that you can cash in on when you stub your toe, it's basically like as frivolous as that. But from what I understand, it's a lot more sophisticated than that. And the IRS is not really allowing individual people, wealthy individuals to do these captive policies in the same way that they were. But what they essentially do is they shelter their money by putting them in, and it makes a lot of sense for big businesses. Walmart does this. Lots of - 90% of the Fortune 1000 companies, according to Peter Strauss, do it. But you put all this money in this little, you know, it's called a tax shelter, and you take out loans because it's basically a tax deferral program. So what you ended up doing is you can take out loans against it, and it protects your money. It's essentially you're living off the loans off of your own money. So that's really...

Eric Bland 17:15

The question is, when do you repay those loans?

Liz Farrell 17:17

Do you ever repay the loans? Exactly.



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Eric Bland 17:20

They never do the other end of the deal. When you borrow the money, you do a promissory note. Who's checking to make sure that it's a repayment.

Liz Farrell 17:27

So one of the questions that was asked of me is why - because what we're hearing is like...in the community, in Hilton Head, is that people are surprised it took this long for Peter Strauss to get in trouble with the Office of Disciplinary Council just because he's been rumored for years to have been doing or being adjacent to these sort of money grabs, I guess where where people are trying to hide their money from the government. So one of the things that - why we thought that Peter J. Strauss might hold the keys to where Alex money is because I can't imagine a world where Alex is doing things by the book, right? But I also can't imagine a world where he gets ultra super complicated with his money either, but...

Eric Bland 18:04

You need discipline.

Liz Farrell 18:05

Yeah, right. Discipline. Yeah, because it's like you have to have - if you do it the right way, you need discipline, you need somebody keeping track of it, you need forms. But you create a company, right? And then you have 12 different cells under that company, right? And you and 11 of your friends can create these different policies. So it's something that you can go in on with friends or perhaps business associates or what have you. High net worth people. But again, Alex is a guy who did not lend his own law firm money each year the way the partners did. Remember when he took Randy's check, he stole Randy's check, which was basically like a return on that loan. He never gave...like we always used to joke he was like, "No, yeah, not me. I can't, I can't do it this year." But he was always like, we joked during the original time of this, like when all this stuff started to come out about Alex that his money flows in one direction. And it's to him. It's not, you don't see it flowing away from him. You see it sort of just living off the grid disappearing. So...



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Mandy Matney 19:11

Yeah, it's funny that you mentioned that because I was thinking about this last night. In reading this lawsuit. I have to like - actually, I want to go back first. So the Peter Strauss thing was exciting for Liz and I, because it was, again, a very validating step in this extremely long journey that we have had trying to get answers in this entire thing. And Liz, David and I had a conversation, I don't know a week ago, and we were honestly trying to think of like, how do we wrap up Murdaugh within the near future? How do we put a bow on this and what are the things that we really need answers on? Besides Stephen. Stephen is separate, but I'm talking about every week talking about Dick and Jim. We are all tired of it and their nonsense. And so, we were thinking like, oh, there's hope on the horizon for a new day and then like magic, this Peter Strauss thing comes down. And this is a name that we have been hearing for years. And I'm talking like I would go to the salon and women would pull me to the side and say, "You need to look into Peter Strauss if you're looking for Alex Murdaugh's money." Lots of people on Hilton Head have a lot of questions about Peter Strauss. And as Liz said, this has been like a quiet whisper thing for the past several years. And the fact that the ODC is coming down pretty hard on him - and Eric, a thing I wanted to ask you, he was suspended for rule 17(a). What is rule 17(a)?

Eric Bland 20:55

I don't have that off the tip of my tongue. I can go get a rulebook if you want me to.

Liz Farrell 20:58

You know why you don't, Eric? Because you are a good person. 17(a) is you've been criminally indicted or there's sufficient evidence to show that you may have committed a crime.

Mandy Matney 21:09

Here is David with what rule 17(a) says:

DAVID MOSES 21:14

"Criminal prosecution or conviction for a serious crime. Without the necessity of commission action, the Supreme Court may place a lawyer on interim suspension upon notice of the filing of an indictment, information or complaint charging the



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lawyer with a serious crime and shall immediately place a lawyer on interim suspension on receipt of a certified copy of a judgment of conviction or other competent evidence showing that the lawyer has been convicted of a serious crime. The fact that sentencing may be delayed or an appeal may be taken shall not prevent the Supreme Court from imposing an interim suspension.”

Liz Farrell 22:00

It basically, it's not simply that you've been charged with misconduct, he has two counts against him, according to his Disciplinary Council order, the order from the Supreme Court rather. So it's different from Alex and Cory. It's different from the Magistrate Judge David Little, who was suspended late last month, he also was suspended on a misconduct charge. That's what stood out from the beginning, because 17(a) was not the same rule that was cited for basically most of the other lawyers you see get disciplined. It's always the sort of generalized misconduct, potential misconduct, right? So in this case, it was a violation of the rules. This indicates that something criminal was afoot. Yeah.

Mandy Matney 22:45

Right. It was interesting to us that like Alex Murdaugh was charged, or was suspended, a couple days after his whole suicide for hire situation and he had already admitted that he was on drugs. Anyways, I'm pretty sure a lot of people knew that he had committed a crime or two at that point. And they didn't even suspend him on 17(a), they suspended him on 17(b), which is just very interesting to me. So it tells me that they have a lot of evidence against Peter for something criminal, which is very serious.

Eric Bland 23:19

Very serious. And I would like to comment, I think there's been a tremendous lack of focus on what has happened to the money in Murdaugh. And it's not only on some of the people that talk about Murdaugh, obviously, we have constantly said, “Where's the money? Where's the money? Show me the money, show me the money.” But I even think the law enforcement agencies and the government itself has focused more on Alex's liability, what he did wrong, what crimes that he violated to get him punished for that. But there's been a lack of attention on everybody's part except



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yours, Mandy and Liz, on where did the money go? And I think that is phase four, the fourth quarter in the Murdaugh story, don't you agree?

Liz Farrell 24:00

I think that there's been a lot of where the money is behind the scenes, Eric. It's been a constant conversation, not just - I feel like yes, they were, SLED and the FBI were focused on the liability maybe or the actual criminal acts themselves. But I do know that this has been a long time coming for people and I say people, I mean lawyers behind the scenes who have been working to find out where his treasure trove of money is. So it's been, it's been constant.

Mandy Matney 24:27

But I will say not a lot of media has really dug into that angle. And that was something that you know, this week, we were preparing for a Becky Hill episode. We were preparing to, we had a - Liz especially had done a lot of behind the scenes reporting and we knew a lot. And again we're trying to put this bow on this thing that just keeps going. And the media just keeps - I mean, every freaking day I get messages from people or Tweets from people saying, "Why don't you guys talk about Becky Hill more? Is this true about Becky Hill? Is that true about Becky Hill?" Because media is so focused on that, and...

Eric Bland 25:04

The here and now. The here and now.

Mandy Matney 25:08

Right. The here and now and it's in the weeds, man. Like they're so in the weeds with the Becky Hill stuff that they don't even understand that it is mostly about ethics violations that have nothing to do with the trial whatsoever. But that's something different.

Liz Farrell 25:23

Beyond that, what she might be in trouble for is something that she wasn't even accused of doing. So, you know.



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Mandy Matney 25:30

Right. It's very complex.

Liz Farrell 25:33

It's complex. And the media is just going with what gets leaked to them. And sometimes, you know, what, Eric, sometimes things get leaked to people in journalism and they hold off on saying anything about it because they first want to make sure that it's authentic. And they also want to make sure that you know, this is not going to mess up any investigations and this isn't going to get a source in trouble and all of that. So while media are tripping over their own, you know, appendages, some people, maybe us, had the same stuff and we're trying to verify. We're trying to, you know, find out the significance, get the information ourselves. So what can you do?

Eric Bland 26:09

You guys are just podcasters, you're not journalists anymore. What do you care about that? Why do you care about standards?

Liz Farrell 26:14

Yeah, we're just podcasters. We're just TikTokers.

Mandy Matney 26:17

We've also opted out of the breaking news situation. I mean, almost destroyed my mental health entirely. Like I have to, I had to rebuild a big part of my life because I was so attached and so obsessed with breaking so much Murdaugh news for so long. And same with Liz.

Eric Bland 26:35

That comes out and your book. That comes out in your book. You could see it from the pages. Every day, you were in that mindset, "I got to break. My bosses want clicks. I got a break, I gotta come up with something new," every day. That's where your mindset was.



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Mandy Matney 26:50

Right and it's exhausting. And it takes you to a very dark place. And Liz went there. And we don't want to do that anymore. And our expertise is about finding out what matters and finding the context behind all these moves. And the strategy. That is what we're good at. And what's happening and predicting what's going to happen next. And what does this really mean? And instead of just - and breaking news can also be very, very damaging, because it's just an immediate reaction. And the media just goes to the next shiny thing, and that people can put out the shiny thing, and they just reflect it and put it out there. And instead of stopping and thinking about it, what am I doing? Am I using this power that I have? Because we do have a lot of power in the media too, for good? Or am I using it just to get clicks? Or am I using it to actually help bad people? And I think, about the Becky Hill situation, I just really think that 90% of the media covering it to the extent that they are and covering every little move would not be doing that whatsoever if Dick hadn't put her on a chopping block and said that she is the reason why Alex is going to get a new trial. And it's just crazy.

Eric Bland 28:11

I did hear, I did hear at the end of the week, or was Wednesday that there is allegedly a connection now between her son's problems and Becky's juror problems. Somebody, some news agency reported that. I'm not saying that's true.

Liz Farrell 28:27

No, no, no, that's not what they said. That's not what they said.

Mandy Matney 28:31

No, they didn't. It's getting so confused because that's what a lot of people took away - and honestly, I read it. I read the headline and I panicked and then I read it again. I did, it said "linked to her ethics violations", not the jury tampering. Which is again...and that's why this is all getting so confusing. And I had several people say the same thing to me. And I was just like, read it again, calm down. Again. We got to keep jury tampering stuff over here. And Becky's ethics and her ethics or possible Ethics Commission violations over here, they are not the same thing. And with that, we need to take a break. We'll be right back.



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Liz Farrell 29:23

So Eric, what you mentioned earlier was that Becky's ethics violations and her son's wiretapping sort of go hand in hand and I think that's based on the timeline of when the wiretapping started, or the alleged wiretapping, I should say, started. But I think the the clarity there that we gained is that there's this notion that the alleged wiretapping was the result of monitoring some sort of interoffice affair that was going on or allegedly going on in Colleton County and now I guess, you know, based on your Drew Tripp's reporting, we now know that it is likely going to, you know, not be about that alleged affair. So, it's going to instead be about listening in to get ahead of this ethics complaint. What is so sad about this is just seeing that - it's almost like I look at this from the perspective of like, if this were 2019 and I found out the Colleton County Clerk of Court had gotten accused of these things in an ethics violation, how would I report it then, absent the context of the Murdaughs, absent all of that? And I know that I would look at it much differently. I know that I would look at it like, okay, this person has been accused of this, let's find out, did she do this stuff? You know, I'd be very leery of believing her side of it or giving her the benefit of the doubt. I would very much be laser focused on what the complaints say and laser focused on what the accusations are and what her side is etc, but not necessarily understanding it as a political...her as political roadkill, in that sense. So, we can't look at it that way, though, because of how powerful the Murdaugh connections are in this and how powerful Dick and Jim are, and really what their ultimate goal is. So I think we can't say that enough. Like when we're looking at this, we're looking at it not necessarily from the perspective of public corruption, we're looking at it from what just happened now, Eric, with you, like, you know, and Mandy, taking that headline to mean, oh God, you know, now now there's this definitive connection between the thing that you know, Alex wants it to be and the thing that it actually is. So we just want to, like we're going to constantly make that divide, that there are two different columns. These are in silos as far as we're concerned, just because, you know, the investigators are finding, you know, X, Y or Z when they look into this does not mean that Alex Murdaugh deserves a new trial. And that's essentially what it is.

Eric Bland 31:37

Let me address that because Lori said that we are so vested in Alex's conviction that we're willing to support Becky, when the allegations against her are so obvious. All



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we've ever said is we believe Alex Murdaugh is guilty. We believe the jury found him guilty with the evidence that was put forth in the trial, not because we have some personal animus against him. Yes, we don't like him because of all the different dastardly things he did. But we watched the trial and we felt it was a fair trial and we felt it was a just verdict. So we are vested in the just verdict. We are vested in Becky Hill, because what we know about Becky on the jury tampering issues are, they are highly questionable. We have never said on the ethics issues or anything else that we support them. We don't know about them, we're gonna let them play out. But as far as the jury tampering issues we are supporting Becky until we see something concrete, which shows that Alex did not get a fair trial. So let's be clear. And Mandy is right. We siloed that. The jury tampering issues are on the left, the ethics issues are on the right.

Liz Farrell 32:45

Beyond that, we also know how the Murdaugh's use the legal system, and we also know that their power is still very potent in Colleton County and we're seeing literal connections between the complaints that were made against Becky and the family. So I mean, what? We're gonna ignore that? Get real.

Mandy Matney 33:02

And with what you said about Murdaugh - it's the timeline that bothers me the most with all of these complaints. It's the fact that this stuff didn't start coming out until this summer until people knew that she was writing a book, until people knew that she was an easy target. And I keep thinking about this and what's going to happen because Team Murdaugh's side is that if her reputation is so destroyed, and if her credibility is gone, then it will just come down to simply the Clerk of Court was corrupt so you need a new trial. But that's not what the law says, correct?

Eric Bland 33:50

No, no! It comes down to jurors, the jurors still count. My clients, their statements in there, what they're willing to testify to and the other jurors, that counts as well. Judge Newman's observations count as well. Other bailiffs. Other court personnel. Their things count as well. It's not just this sine qua non that if Becky's somehow tainted, it's over. That's not the case. She's part of a batter of a cake mix. She's not the most



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important thing. Yes, she's very important, but there's a lot of other components to it. Now something that was provocative in a way that made me think, if Becky wrote her book during the trial...

Liz Farrell 34:29

No, she did not say that she did not say that.

Eric Bland 34:32

I'm saying if Becky, if Becky wrote the book during the trial she's doing it on the public dime and time. And she is a public official, she should have been spending her time on the Clerk of Court stuff and not writing a book. Is that a valid concern?

Liz Farrell 34:47

No. She was not writing her book. She did not meet Neil until three weeks after the trial. She was keeping notes. She had a journal. You don't...and you don't know when, I mean was Becky journaling at night before she went to bed? I mean, we don't know, I don't know. And I feel like if somebody is going to know their stuff, it's going to be us. So, but you're right, that would be a good point if it were accurate.

Mandy Matney 35:08

But again, I think people are mashing all of this together and it might be like, there, there might be problems with her book, yes, ethics violation problems, but it has nothing to do with the trial. And also we have to, you have to go back to Dick and Jim's original complaint and what her motive was in that complaint. And that is something TikTok, and a lot of talking heads in this are failing to understand and failing to actually stop and think about, but their entire theory is based on Becky having this motive to tamper with a jury to secure a guilty verdict, so that she can have a self-published book. And that is insane. It's absurd. And it does not make any sense. Her book would have been better and more interesting if it was a hung jury, or if it was a not guilty jury, because everybody would be looking for what was going on on the inside like, "What happened here?" The fact that, and I say this because Lori and all these other people keep on debating about when she got the idea to have a book. And the reason why they think that that matters is because of this absurd theory that she was thinking throughout the entire trial of her book and her book



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only and tampering with the jury and making sure that, "Oh, he's got to be guilty so I can get my book out by July," which is insane. And so there's just all of this talk about like, "When did she start thinking about the book and blah, blah, blah." It doesn't matter, because that is insane. And again, there's no evidence of her tampering with the jury. So let's just leave it at that. And then the other thing that we're seeing is just the power, I think that certain people in our state have, when they do have an issue with somebody in authority, and that they can investigate them, and they can tear them apart, and they can find anything, but there's - what frustrates me is, meanwhile, there's a circle of people doing a whole lot worse things that just go untouched. And nobody cares about them and the media that is tearing Becky Hill apart, they don't care about people who are actually using their positions to hurt others and to put public safety at risk and bigger things, a lot bigger things that matter versus what Becky is being accused of doing. And that's what bothers me. It's rules for some and as Liz and I were talking about this week, it seems like in South Carolina, the only time that ethics matters, and the only time people get in trouble for ethical violations is when someone in power is able to take advantage of taking that person down. And it's just not right. So that's my spiel.

Eric Bland 38:04

I may be incorrect, but when Dick and Jim and Phil made their speech at the Statehouse didn't Dick insinuate it wasn't a self-published book? He thought that she got this advance and that, you know, she had a publisher and that she was going to make big money. And then that's when Neil came out and said, "Oh, by the way, we funded this on our own money. We have sold like very few books." You know, because Dick tried to say this was a, you know, kind of a Simon and Schuster type of advance. Did I remember that correctly?

Liz Farrell 38:32

No, it was more that John Monk, the reporter from The State asked him like, you know, "How can you make this claim she was looking for this book deal when she doesn't have a book deal? She self published it." And he, Dick immediately rejected that as like, "I can't explain her failure." You know, like, it doesn't matter. Like basically, it doesn't matter, it's what she wanted that matters. You know, it's something that struck us immediately when we originally read the ethics complaints. Leading up to



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these ethics complaints we've had to deal with a lot of people, just like what you just said a little while ago, and I want to stop talking about her. But the TikToker was saying that we are Team Becky. During the trial, there was, it was almost like, I think that Mandy and I get like maligned over and over again as mean girls. This is something that has followed us for years now. Because of the way we work together. We're really not mean. Like it we're not there's not this like exclusionary vibe to us. It's just that we happen to work well together. It's our comfort zone. We're both introverts. It's just where we reside naturally, right? So they think that we're these mean, girls who, you know, don't want anything to do with anyone else. But really, it was the opposite. It's like we were the ones that were sort of shunned during the trial as being like, we're too good to come to the courtroom. We're not valid people. Not everyone was like that, Eric, like some of the journalists were very kind, from out of state, were very kind to us. But overall, especially the in-state ones I've just noticed - I remember being in Charleston and going into the hotel lobby and seeing all the reporters after I think it was like Cory's sentencing sitting around and talking to each other and like laughing and I was like, "I want to sit down and talk with you guys too." But like, you know, it just felt like I'm not part of that. So I just want to say that because that little group of reporters that sort of clicked together, were very team Becky. Very. I mean, at least outwardly appearing. And from what we found out later. These people that are now reporting on her stuff, they were hanging out with her.

Eric Bland 40:26

Yes, it was every day in the Nature Center. In the Nature Center, that's where everybody was congregating. And I remember when you and I walked into that party that night, you and I walked in, Liz, you were not uncomfortable, but you had not been in that environment.

Liz Farrell 40:40

No, I had not been into that environment. But to say this now we get the ethics violations, right? And like now there's all this speculation from you know, that comes out about Becky, "Oh, Liz and Mandy are going to be on her phone. And Liz and Mandy. And Liz and Mandy, you did this and did that with her." And this is all that, we had no relationship with her. None! But then we read in the ethics complaints that these frickin' people that that these trolls like gravitate to and they're like, "Oh,



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they're the holy grail of Murdaugh news here," were the ones that were so close with her that they're having book signings in the courtroom, and that they're going on, you know, she's going on their podcast and talking to them. She didn't go on our podcast. Like we didn't ask her, we didn't ask her to. So it's like, it just gets me so irritated in general. But I just want to point that out, because the ethics complaints have reporters' names in them, including an accusation that the reporters paid for her birthday party. We're not, we're not mentioned. Because we have nothing to do with any of that.

Mandy Matney 41:36

Yeah. She thanks several reporters in her book, we are not in that. Because like, here's the deal, like we're both quiet, but we're both very purpose driven. And when we work, we work. And I've always been this way. Like I've never had problems making friends with coworkers, neither have you Liz, but we're just not into that like chit chat. It was not a social event for us. It was the most important few weeks of our career. It was work. It was very serious work to us. And I didn't want to be in an environment where people were partying and partying with the Clerk of Court and whatever. I was doing, and we were doing, very serious source work throughout the entire trial. We were on the phone with sources during and after the trial every single day. And because we were very serious and you know, excluded ourselves...and it happened like with my book. Not a single local reporter has responded to a single email, done anything relatively - they all promote Michael DeWitt's book, that's fine, they won't promote mine. And that's just the way that it is.

Eric Bland 42:51

You don't need it. Your book is doing its own promotion.

Mandy Matney 42:57

I've accepted that, but it's just kind of a...it's like high school again, you know. And then you have to take a step back and be like, "I don't really want to be in that club anyways, so..."

Eric Bland 43:06

But you've been let down. You know, the truth of the matter is, Mandy.



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Mandy Matney 43:09

But it does hurt.

Eric Bland 43:10

If you read your book, you've been let down by some journalists, okay? It's a very competitive business that you guys are in. I mean, it's competitive, just like lawyering is and any other industry. And people that you got close to when you gave them some information and helped them out and educated them, they let you down. So it's okay that you feel this way.

Mandy Matney 43:30

Right and it's normal to put up walls. And again, we were so laser focused during the trial, on the trial, and it was so big and I don't think a lot of the journalists there understood how big of a moment and a deal that was for us. But circling back like everybody always asked me, "Are you sure he's guilty?" I get that. I've been getting that a lot recently. And, "Is he going to get a new trial?"

Liz Farrell 43:56

We're team, not using the system to trick it into giving Alex a new trial. That's the team we're on. Team anticorruption.

Eric Bland 44:02

We're not going to go down the rabbit hole that everybody wants to go down right now that Becky ruined the trial. We're not going to do that. Until there's proof that she wrecked the trial, because that's all we're concerned about. Look, if Becky stole money, or Becky did something inappropriate or whatever the Ethics Commission is going to deal with her. Most likely she's not going to be Clerk of Court going forward. That's, let the system work and the system will work. But we want to know and we want that answer. Did she wrecked the trial? It's that simple. And we'll be right back.

Mandy Matney 44:42

Okay, one of the accusations in the complaint about Becky, it has to do with her misappropriating money, but it was far before the trial. Correct, Liz?



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Liz Farrell 44:51

Yeah. Oh, yeah. So the accusations were in 2021. They stem from 2021.

Mandy Matney 44:57

Which is extremely suspicious because if you were in her office and if you knew that the biggest event ever was coming to Colleton County, and if you had any suspicions about the Clerk of Court being corrupt, shouldn't you have said that before the trial?

Liz Farrell 45:16

Yeah, you should have. In fact, it was that person's responsibility to have said something if she thought that money was being taken, or...yeah, for sure. But she waited until July 2023, when it helped certain individuals such as Dick and Jim, so you know.

Mandy Matney 45:31

Right, exactly. And I just don't want to live in a world with a justice system that a man can be found guilty based off of serious and solid evidence, and based off a lot of great work from a lot of great people. And that somehow gets turned into one woman involved in the trial had a reputation destroyed, therefore, that man who was found guilty by a fair trial gets a new trial. That's an insane thing. And that is where our justice system would go completely off the rails. And again, guess who, only people like Alex Murdaugh with a lot of privilege, a lot of money and a lot of power are able to do what Dick and Jim are doing right now, which is leaking stuff to the media and destroying this one person. And if we want a fair justice system, that ain't it.

Liz Farrell 46:24

That ain't it. Let's move on to, because we got a question that I think is an interesting one, and it goes back to what we were talking about before with the Peter Strauss case. One of the things, a couple of things we were sitting on, we had a transcript from a hearing that happened in the federal court in which Peter Strauss pled the Fifth dozens and dozens of times, which the transcript actually was given to us anonymously. And the second thing was as part of his divorce filings, there's depositions included in there. And we know from these Murdaugh cases that, you



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know, sort of how these depositions have helped, especially online sleuths, I guess, when they're going through, like what happened in the boat crash case. And what have you. I mean, there's a lot of information that's contained in these depositions. And I remember, Eric, I said to you, what would happen if I showed up at one of your depositions? I believe it was the Russell Laffitte deposition. Because technically speaking, it's a court proceeding, correct? You're sworn in, it's open to the public, right? But I think it was you, it might have been another lawyer, who was like, "Please don't do that. Don't show up at this deposition."

Eric Bland 47:28

Well, what's going to happen is they'll call a judge, right? They'll call a judge, and they'll say that, you know, you can sequester you, but you have to do that before the deposition to say, sequester people out of the deposition, you know, parties have a right to attend. So if I'm the party in the case, I have a right to attend every deposition. You can't exclude me. But you can make a motion to say, "Well, we don't want this person to come in. Because if they listen to that person's testimony, it'll color their testimony." And it's usually, depositions are back-to-back. So if you're at one o'clock and Mandy's at two o'clock, Mandy wants to sit in on your deposition, because she's going to be deposed, and she wants to hear the questions. If somebody doesn't make a motion to sequester, Mandy technically has a right to sit in on your deposition.

Liz Farrell 48:10

But as a member of the media, that was the question. I believe I was sent, I think it was a statute or it was a rule of proceeding or something that sort of I thought, you know, could be interpreted to allow members of the public or the media to attend a deposition. And you're saying that you'd have to call a judge, and that would have to be tested, the judge would have to basically decide.

Eric Bland 48:29

No, the other party would call a judge and test that. I would say, "Liz has a right to be here." This is a public proceeding, all these depositions are going to be used in lieu of somebody testifying in court, sometimes. You get somebody in a deposition, they don't become a witness at trial, and you use their deposition in court. The other



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party's going to object and say, "I'm going to call a judge, you know, I don't want the media here." And who knows what a judge would do.

Liz Farrell 48:52

And depositions, for Mandy and me, in particular, journalists all over are some of the best reading that you could ever hope for in your job, because...Chad Westendorf's I forgot about. Maybe that was the one I was going to show up for. But yeah, there's I mean, we get excited when we get especially a full deposition sent to us. In the boat crash case, and I think maybe Dick and Jim have done this, too, maybe I don't know or remember, but - so lawyers will include in their filing, sometimes pieces of depositions, but not the full deposition itself. And that's sort of a courtesy, right? That you guys could file the whole deposition if you want to, but you're supposed to limit it when possible, right to the matter at hand?

Eric Bland 49:33

Yeah. Because, well, the rule says you file a whole deposition, but no judge wants a 300-page deposition. If the summary judgment is on a statute of limitations issue, you provide him with that testimony that deals with statute limitations. He doesn't care about the guy's college background or where he went to high school or his job history. However, lawyers are a little deceptive sometimes that they'll file only a part of the discussion about the statute of limitations which benefits them. And then there's actually more pages in the back of the transcript that deal with it that put it in context. That explains it a little bit more. And so the adversary then puts the other contrary pages in or the ones that should have been in for...there's a rule called completeness. And the judge will look at the first party and say, "Well, why did you only include those two pages when he said this at the back of the transcript, which put everything in context?" So you really do have to watch lawyers when they cite only portions of depositions. And you have to watch lawyers, when they only cite a portion of a case. It happens all the time that they'll pick out this language of a judicial opinion. And then you'll see the other side say, "But he didn't give you the rest of the sentence or the rest of the paragraph." And that's the duty of candor to a court because a judge has to be given the entirety, the full facts and not be misled. And lawyers have a tendency to do it with deposition citing and also with case sightings.



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Liz Farrell 51:02

So that's like something that a lawyer legislator could probably get away with, right? It's just putting in part of it and not getting in trouble by the judge, because the judge is too scared to say something or hesitant to say something. And then as far as a deposition being something that could be FOIA'd. These are very expensive things for lawyers, right? I mean, how much does the deposition typically cost?

Eric Bland 51:23

If I'm going to take somebody's deposition and I'm the originator, meaning I noticed it, I have to pay the original fee. A five hour deposition with the transcript will probably cost me about \$2000. Now, if it's a party, and/or very important witness, I also video it too. I have a videographer there, which costs another \$1500. So you can end up spending \$4,000 for just one person's deposition. It's extremely expensive. Not saying the court reporters aren't worth it. I'm not saying that. It's just an extremely costly endeavor.

Liz Farrell 51:53

And then there's an expedited fee, right for the transcripts?

Eric Bland 51:58

Yeah, then you pay double.

Liz Farrell 51:59

Do you guys sort of play chicken with each other to see who's going to pay the expedited fee so that you can all can get it or is there...

Eric Bland 52:05

Yeah and the other thing that's not fair, and I don't do this, but some lawyers do is, I'll originate it, and then the other party wants a copy. They don't pay the court reporter for it, they'll get the lawyer on the other side to give them a copy. And then they'll split the cost. And that's not fair to the court reporter. I don't do that. I don't ever cut out the court reporter. Because she makes it both on the originator and then anybody who wants a copy.



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Liz Farrell 52:30

Right, and these can be rather expensive. So going back to the FOIA question, is that something that the public can FOIA from the reporter and pay for it, obviously? And why is that?

Eric Bland 52:40

No, it's not a, because it's a private proceeding. Yes, it's true that they're in a public forum of court, but unless it's a government that's a party, you can't FOIA a transcript. Unless the government is part of the party. If it's the State of South Carolina, or you know, an administrative agency, such as DSS or DHEC or something like that, but to private parties, you can't FOIA transcript.

Mandy Matney 53:05

Yeah, it's amazing in journalism, how much lawsuits really help us understand deeper aspects of a story and like circling it. Like the boat crash lawsuit is a perfect example. We were able to find out so much more, had there not been a lawsuit in that crash, I wouldn't have followed the story for two years, because there wouldn't - I mean, I would have investigated behind the scenes and everything, but there wouldn't be concrete things to cite and to keep the story alive. So lawsuits are so important for not only getting facts out, but they're an important tool for journalists to use. And we saw that again in the Peter Strauss case and trying to find out how his business works. Well, he has an ex-wife who's trying to get his assets. So there are a lot of filings in that case about what she has accused his company of doing and how his company worked, and how his shell companies or whatever, offshore trust and things like that. I learned a whole lot. But it's really amazing how we can, lawyers that wanted help and want to do good have helped me so much in the last few years being like, "I have a deposition. You can read this and then you'll get a lot more information on what you're trying to figure out."

Liz Farrell 54:28

Yeah, I love a good deposition. I honestly would read that above any piece of fiction. Sometimes, because...



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Eric Bland 54:34

I'm not sure I agree with that. You guys look for the juicy details, you love the juicy details.

Liz Farrell 54:41

I love the juicy. I love drama and then they have lots of information, but beyond that they can result in criminal charges or at least a criminal investigation like it did with the boat crash. That's how the obstruction of justice accusation started coming because of things that law enforcement were saying in the deposition. So I will always have a soft spot. My only criticism, if I were to give it any notes is that it's not FOIA'able, because God, that would be so much fun if we could just FOIA away for depositions all day long. So message to lawyers, share, share, share with media when you can.

Eric Bland 55:15

Yeah, can I take a moment for a personal license if I could? So, I have received some criticism this week on the fact that I'm representing an alleged murderer. A father and son, who are accused of killing somebody after they came on, after the person came on their property with a machete, a mask on and a Pit Bull. And he had done it a number of times to their property and a number of other properties. And how can I do that and say that somebody is presumed innocent, and then I criticize Dick and Jim, when they represented Alex, who was an accused murderer. It's a different story. Alex, his situation, I criticize Dick and Jim, that they've overlooked all the financial crimes. And he certainly had a right to a very vibrant, vigilant defense on the murder charges. What I criticized Dick and Jim on was the hypocrisy on all the financial crime cases and how much they went in deep and some of the statements they said. My particular case deals with property rights and self-defense of people that have never been involved in the criminal justice system. Two people that have zero criminal record. High members of their community, farmers. And it's a property rights case. It's different. If they had the background that Alex had, if they did the things that Alex had done, I would not have gotten involved. And that's all I'm gonna say about it. So there is a quality difference to it. And I never criticized Dick and Jim for representing Alex on the murder case. I criticize them for how they handled Paul's defense and also on the financial crimes matters.



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Mandy Matney 56:49

It's trickery. It's trickery that we had a problem with.

Eric Bland 56:53

Trickery. And with that said, I'm really excited next week, because I get to interview on Happy Hour, my partner, Ronnie Richter, and he's going to be under oath. And I'm going to get to ask him all the questions that I've always wanted to ask him. You know, boxers or briefs? You know, cereal or eggs? And first, what makes you tick? Why would you ever be partners with a guy like me? You know, his background. He's a third generation Navy pipe fitter. He doesn't come from privilege even though he lives in Charleston. He's got a completely different personality than I do. He has a wonderful story. He donated his kidney to his wife who had a very significant kidney ailment, and her kidneys were failing. And the idea that a husband and wife would match is like such a low, low, low percentage, and they ended up matching and so it's just a great story. And so I'm really looking forward to that on Happy Hour next Thursday night, 7:00. Join in if you can Premium members and anybody who wants to listen, so that's what I had to say. Thanks, guys for giving me that minute.

Liz Farrell 57:57

Ronnie is a really nice guy. He's also a really good writer.

Mandy Matney 58:00

Yeah, he is. He's really smart. I'm excited for that. You're a great interviewer. Well, guys, great show.

Eric Bland 58:06

Great show! Cups down.

Mandy Matney 58:07

Cups down.

Liz Farrell 58:08

Cups down, guys.



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Mandy Matney 58:17

Cup of Justice is a LunaShark production created by me, Mandy Matney and co hosted by journalist Liz Farrell and attorney Eric Bland. Learn more about our mission and membership at lunasharkmedia.com. Interruptions provided by Luna and Joe Pesky.

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