



EPISODE 77: It's Finally Here: The Trial of Alex Murdaugh Begins with Big Revelations

[00:00:00] **Mandy Matney:** I don't know if Alex Murdaugh will be convicted in the murders of his wife and son, but we are here in Walterboro, South Carolina, covering every twist and turn, and we have a long and windy road ahead. My name is Mandy Matney. I have been covering the Murdaugh family for almost four years now. This is a special episode of the Murdaugh Murders Podcast live from Walterboro as the Murdaugh murders trial is now underway. MMP is produced by my husband, David Moses, and written by my best friend and partner in true crime, the amazing Liz Farrell.

[00:00:50] Well, hello. Believe me when I say that a big part of me never believed that this day would actually come where we would tell you that Alex Murdaugh is now on trial in the murders of his wife and son. And given all the unpredictable curve balls that we've been thrown in this saga, that fact alone is a big deal. Let's start today off with some really good news for the victims in this case. On Tuesday, Judge Daniel Hall approved the settlement agreement between the Beach family and two of the boat crash victims with Buster Murdaugh and the estate of Maggie Murdaugh. That is a big deal and a huge win for the Beach family and the victims of the boat crash. It is also a big loss to three parties who, in my opinion, have been unbelievably selfish and tone-deaf. After we announced the proposed settlement a few weeks ago, Alex's former law partner and apparently giant loan giver, Johnny Parker, filed his objection. Why? Because he wanted to skip the line ahead of the victims and take more than half of what the victims were expected to net from the settlement after all of the lawyers have been paid. Then, Palmetto State Bank joined in with their objection. Then, Greg Parker of Parker's Kitchen and gas stations did the same thing. It was stunning to see this callous greed play out and it was honestly disheartening because it made us wonder whether anyone in the realm of the Murdaughs actually cares about other people. And that's why it was such a huge relief to hear that the judge saw what we were seeing and what Beach family Attorney Mark Tinsley was seeing. Judge Hall did the right thing, the fair thing. We know that it won't bring back Mallory, but this was about justice. For the Beach family, it has always been about sending a strong message to the Murdaughs and to anyone out there recklessly facilitating underage drinking, especially when they know that



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there would be driving involved. Yesterday was a well-deserved victory for them and for their message, but their mission is not over. They still have a battle to fight against Parker's Kitchen, Alex, and the estate of Paul Murdaugh. And I have to say this again. I don't know where we would be today if it wasn't for the bravery of Renee Beach and her family going to Mark Tinsley back in 2019 to demand answers in the boat crash case. When we talk about the brave people in this saga who willingly stuck out their necks before the dominoes fell and it was much easier to hop on the anti-Murdaugh train, Renee Beach should always be mentioned. Think about it. She and Mark Tinsley filed a lawsuit against the Murdaughs in Hampton. That is courage that we commend here at MMP.

[00:03:44] And more good news to share. I wanted to say thank you to the thousands of those listening who have already signed up for MMP Premium. MMP Premium launched on December 15th and we are so happy with what we've accomplished so far. You know, there have been several times in the last few years when I wanted to quit social media altogether. It was just too much negativity to deal with on top of the dark realities of the story. I was really losing hope for humans there for a minute. I'm sure this sounds cheesy, but whatever. The MMP Premium community has honestly restored my faith in humans. I get so much joy when I log in and see MMP fans being kind, considerate, and supportive of each other on Discord. It's truly a beautiful thing to witness. And the community is also helping us improve the show. The fans are putting together documents and they're asking really good questions. And they're not only encouraging us, they're helping us, which is amazing. So, we will be broadcasting all available audio and video from the trial on unlisted YouTube lives and our hosts are regularly interacting with our biggest supporters. The live interaction is exclusive for Soak Up the Sun tier members, but all members will have access to the videos after live coverage concludes. We are also distributing enhanced audio episodes, videos, documents, recaps, and case materials on mmp.supercast.com for members, depending on what tier they sign up for. And here is the best part. MMP Premium has grown to the point where we can finally announce our first contributing journalist. You may remember him from his story on this case in



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my reporting in *The Guardian*, which is based in the UK. He has written for *Sports Illustrated*, *The Atlantic*, and *The Dallas Morning News*. Drew Lawrence is a features writer for *The Guardian*, a freelancer for several other national publications, and a host of *The Red Bulletin's* F1 podcast, *Ready for the Big Time*. But his key hobby has been obsessing over all of our Murdaugh news breaks. Please welcome Drew Lawrence to our growing network of journalists. At the moment, Drew is researching just how long injustice goes back in the 14th Circuit where the Murdaughs reign for nearly a hundred years. How did that impact families who live here? Generational power, disparate applications of justice, and ultimately, a lot of tragedy — Drew will be unpacking it all. We will have a proper introduction to all MMP Premium members in the Discord channel soon, but you can welcome Drew by sending us or him an email, sending warm vibes and support. And tips are always welcome. See the description for Drew's contact info and links. And thank you to the MMP Premium community. We are just getting started.

[00:06:41] Okay. Y'all are going to wanna buckle up for this one. A lot of really important things have happened in the past three days. Let's first talk about the opening statements on Wednesday afternoon. Three words: Big Creighton Energy. Prosecutor Creighton Waters was phenomenal. He delivered a powerful, simple, clean, and compelling opening statement that contained a lot of new facts in it and gave more details to facts we have told you about before. This is significant because we were not sure what was going to happen after Tuesday afternoon's evidentiary hearing. So, to catch you up, there were several motions to consider. One was Creighton's request to admit evidence of Alex's motive, meaning evidence of the financial crimes. We've talked about this a lot on *Cup of Justice* — how Newman was not going to want to have several mini trials with the larger trial because the state is trying the murder case first. And that is what would've had to happen. Turns out, that was correct. Judge Newman told Creighton they'd have to make decisions about mentioning Alex's alleged financial crimes as they come up during trial. That was the solution for a lot of the outstanding motions, like Creighton's request to bar Dick and Jim's mentioning of anything about Eddie Smith's polygraph and stopping them from pointing to third-party



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guilt, meaning he wanted to prevent them from trying to misdirect the jury by suggesting the real killer is still out there. Dick assured the court that before he did any of that, he would ask the judge first.

[00:08:21] Also important: on Tuesday afternoon, a ballistics expert testified to show the judge that he is qualified to present his findings on the casings found near Maggie's body and older casings found in other parts of the property and how the bullets that killed Maggie match a rifle that's owned by the family. You'll hear more about this in a minute. The judge agreed to allow the ballistics testimony, which was a huge win for the state. That evidence is damning. Now, the interesting thing on Tuesday is that Creighton told the court he is postponing his decision as to whether to enter the blood spatter findings into evidence. That was super concerning because from the outside in, it looked like the state was relying heavily on this evidence, which obviously the defense has been fighting really hard to keep out.

[00:09:12] **Liz Farrell:** Our Cup of Justice co-host, Eric Bland, brought up an interesting point about the blood spatter on Wednesday night. After hearing Creighton's opening statement, Eric said he thinks the state's case is really strong without it. He even wondered for a moment if the state had sent Dick and Jim on this year-long wild goose chase, purposely letting them believe that the blood spatter evidence was super critical to the case. It's actually not a crazy thought. So, after Tuesday's hearing, we were wondering how Creighton was going to be able to work around the financial crimes and the blood spatter in his opening statement. Because they hadn't decided definitively on whether to bring up this evidence later, he wasn't going to wanna mention them to the jury just yet. And I'm not gonna lie. We were a little on edge Wednesday afternoon as opening statements began. But Creighton did great and Dick, well, let's just put it this way. If he gave his opening statement on the street, he would've been arrested immediately for public disorderly conduct. We'll show you what we mean in a bit.

[00:10:11] One more thing before we get into the opening statements. We got our answers about the family finally. Shortly before quorum was set to begin



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at 3:00 PM, Alex's family showed up. There was his brother, Randy, his brother, John Marvin, their sister, Lynn, Lynn's daughter, Mills, John Marvin's wife, Liz, who apparently shot dagger eyes at Eric Bland for some reason, Alex's son, Buster, and Buster's girlfriend, Brooklyn, along with John Marvin's best friend, Billy Schumann, who is a real estate agent. This is the first time the family has shown up for Alex — other than Lynn, who was at the hearing on Tuesday afternoon, where she sobbed and held hands with Alex. We know from the jailhouse calls that she has taken everything that's happened to their family really hard and we feel for her. But we had no idea where Buster fell in terms of the spectrum of support for his father. Was he there on Wednesday out of obligation? Was he there because he got bullied into it? Was he too polite and deferential to the men in his family to say no? Or does he simply not believe that his father was capable of this atrocity? Time will tell. This group gathered outside the courtroom and waited until the jury was seated before they walked into the room. Eric was in the room at the time and said it was very theatrical and very, very strategic. The defense wanted the jury to see Alex's reaction to seeing the family together like that for think and who knows with these guys, the very first time since getting arrested in October 2021. His reaction was very dramatic, Eric said. Alex was overcome with emotion and began shaking. The family sat two rows behind him. The row between them had a few law enforcement officers in it. And they were there, we think, so there could be that moment we just mentioned and so Dick could gesture to them during his opening statement. But imagine a guy screaming in the street about blood and brains bouncing off ceilings and being honored to represent Alex Murdaugh. Then, imagine him going, "And his family is here for him." That is not the move Dick thought it was. Maggie's family, by the way, did not seem to be there.

[00:12:17] We should probably tell you a little bit about Alex real quick. He did not look good. He's thinner, paler, fluffier in the head, blacker in the eyes, and overall schlumpy. During jury selection when the potential jurors and the judge were in the room, he looked like a character from a Charles Dickens novel — hunched over and all but shivering from the injustice of his plight as a porridge-eating street urchin. When the potential jury and the judge



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weren't in the room, however, he became brighter, more upright, and more interested in convivial chit-chat — much like the, quote, convivial chit-chat that Dick and Jim have insisted he was engaging in with Maggie and Paul right before their murders. Kind of shows that a man could be two wildly different things at the flip of the switch, right?

[00:13:04] Okay. Let's do this. We're going to start with that Big Creighton energy we love. When you're listening to this, remember that some of this information might be new to Dick and Jim and Alex. In that giant discovery file from the state, they were given all the evidence. But some of it, like the cell phone data, was given to them in raw form. So, Dick and Jim didn't necessarily know what the state had gleaned from it. But if they didn't know then, they definitely know now.

[00:13:33] **Judge Clifton Newman:** We now proceed to opening statements by the State.

[00:13:36] **Creighton Waters:** Thank you, Your Honor. May it please the Court. On the evening of June 7th, 2021 at the defendant's property off Moselle Road in Colleton County, his son, Paul Murdaugh, is standing in a small feeding room in some kennels they had on the property. About 8:50 PM and the defendant over there, Alex Murdaugh, took a 12-gauge shotgun and shot him in the shoulder, in the chest, in the shoulder with buckshot, and the evidence is gonna show it was a million-to-one shot. He could've survived that. But after that, another shot went up under his head and did catastrophic damage to his brain and his head. The evidence is gonna show that Paul collapsed right outside that feeding room. And just moments later, just moments later, he picked up a .300 Blackout, which is a type of ammunition but an AR-style rifle. And the evidence is gonna show that the family had multiple weapons throughout the property. Picked up that 300 Blackout rifle and opened fire on his wife, Maggie, just feet away near some sheds that used to be a hangar. Pow pow. Two shots — abdomen and the leg and took her down. And after, that there were additional shots, including two shots to the head that, again, did catastrophic damage and killed her instantly. The evidence is gonna show



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that neither Paul nor Maggie had any defensive wounds. Neither one of them had any defensive wounds, as if they didn't see a threat coming from their attacker. And the evidence is also gonna show that both had Maggie and Paul were shot at extremely close range. The evidence is gonna show it's called stippling. It's almost like a tattoo that when you get shot very close to a weapon, it leaves marks that the forensic pathologist can see. They were shot at close range and they did not have defensive wounds. And the evidence is gonna show that the defendant, Alex Murdaugh, over there told anyone who would listen that he was never at those kennels. But the evidence is also gonna show from these things and every one of us, most of us carry around in our pocket, that he was there and he was there just minutes before, with Maggie and Paul just minutes before their cell phones go silent forever. And despite what he told people, "I was never at the kennels," the cell phones are gonna show otherwise.

[00:16:48] **Mandy Matney:** After this introduction to the jury, Creighton then introduced himself and his team. He also explained to the jury what "reasonable doubt" meant and what elements of murder the State had to prove for Alex to be found guilty. Then, he gave them a clear and easy roadmap to follow of the evidence, starting with the guns.

[00:17:12] **Creighton Waters:** You're gonna see body-worn camera of him at the scene when law enforcement arrives and hear what he says. Hear what he says about that night. You're gonna hear three recorded statements on video that he gave with law enforcement and you're gonna hear how things progress about what he says — what he says he did that night. Watch those closely. Watch his expressions. Listen to what he's saying. Listen to what he's not saying. Use that common sense. Does this seem right? Or does something seem a little off? Something seems a little off. I mentioned that Maggie was killed with a 300 Blackout rifle, an AR-style rifle that chambered in .300 Blackout ammunition. And you're gonna hear evidence that back in Christmas of 2016, Alex Murdaugh over there bought two 300 Blackout AR-style rifles. And then not long after that, one of them went missing from Paul's truck. And time went by and in April of 2018, Alex Murdaugh replaced



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that rifle and bought another one. Three total Blackout rifles that they had. One of them went missing years ago and a replacement was bought. You're gonna hear evidence that Paul and his friend were using that replacement gun. They were standing right outside the side door to the gun room of the house and they were — it in, firing down into a field, and the cases were ejecting. The cases are the empty shell from a bullet, and they were ejecting out into the flower bed right there. And then there's a range across the street and they shot it there and there's cases ejected there as well. And they were shooting that third replacement gun just weeks prior to the murders, prior to June 7th, 2021 when Maggie and Paul were murdered. And you're going to hear forensic evidence that the cases that were found in that flowerbed and the cases that were found across the street at that range were ejected out of the same weapon that fired all the cases that were around Maggie's dead body that killed her. It was a family weapon that killed Maggie Murdaugh. You're gonna hear evidence that of those three Blackouts that Alex Murdaugh purchased, when law enforcement arrives at the scene on June 7th, 2021, he can only account for one of them. He can only account for one of them. And that replacement gun is nowhere to be found. You're also gonna hear evidence that the type of ammunition, the exact brand, the exact model of ammunition that was used to kill Maggie, S&B 300 Blackout ammunition and 147-grain bullets, that exact ammunition, boxes empty boxes of that ammunition is found all over the property. The very same brand and model of ammunition that was used to kill her was found at multiple locations throughout the property. And you're also gonna hear evidence the same thing about the shotgun shells that killed Paul.

[00:20:56] **Liz Farrell:** So, this was the first time we were hearing that there are three 300 Blackout rifles to know about and this is where it gets interesting. First, these rifles cost thousands of dollars and are not as ubiquitous as other models. Second, Alex wants us to believe that the gun Maggie was killed with — the same one Paul and his friend were shooting weeks before the murders, the same one that was purchased in 2018 to replace the rifle that went missing a year earlier — was stolen, and then whoever stole it came back to



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the house and used it to murder Maggie. If I were Alex, I might have gone with the excuse that the real killer took it with him but okay.

[00:21:36] **Creighton Waters:** You're also gonna hear evidence that about a week after the murders, Mr. Alex Murdaugh's father had died, Mr. Randolph. And about a week after the murders, he shows up early in the morning at his parents' home where his mother still is in late-stage Alzheimer's on Alameda in Hampton. It's uncharacteristic for him to show up early, uncharacteristic for him to show up at all like that. And he comes in and he's carrying something in a blue tarp and he takes it upstairs and eventually, law enforcement finds out about that. And they go upstairs and they find upstairs they find a wadded up very, very large raincoat in a blue color could look like a tarp and you're gonna hear evidence that it was coated with gunshot residue on the inside.

[00:22:34] **Mandy Matney:** This was a big "Whoa!" moment for us. The inside of his raincoat that he appeared to be stashing a week after the murders was apparently coated in gunshot residue. That could indicate that the coat was wrapped around recently shot weapons. It is going to be interesting to hear whether Alex gave law enforcement an explanation for this.

[00:23:00] **Creighton Waters:** You're gonna hear other evidence of gunshot residue. You're gonna hear that there was gunshot residue on Alex at the scene. You're gonna hear the evidence that there was gunshot residue on the seatbelt of the car he was driving. You're gonna hear evidence that when law enforcement got to the scene, he had gone and gotten a shotgun, Paul's shotgun, and that Maggie's DNA was on that shotgun.

[00:23:19] **Liz Farrell:** Okay. This is a big deal. Gunshot residue was on Alex at the scene. He'll likely try to explain that away as coming from the shotgun he says he grabbed when he found the bodies or from touching Paul or Maggie's bodies. But more than that, there's gunshot residue inside his vehicle. Remember he says he went up to the house, saw they weren't there, and drove to the kennels, got out, saw them, grabbed the shotgun, and called 911.



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So, how did the GSR get inside the truck and on the seat belt? Quick side note here. Seat belts can really trip up a killer because the killer doesn't realize they've transferred evidence onto it. Putting on a seat belt is such a rote activity you don't even think about it later. Kudos to SLED for knowing to check that. Finally, whoa. Maggie's DNA was on the shotgun that belonged to Paul that Alex had grabbed after he allegedly arrived home to find his wife and son dead. How'd that get there? Okay. Now, Creighton is going to get into that cell phone evidence we've talked about. Like we've said, Alex's cell phone will tell the story of what happened and boy, does it. This was the part of the opening statement where Creighton began walking jurors through the timeline of Alex's night.

[00:24:33] **Creighton Waters:** The key piece of forensic evidence that you're gonna hear in this case is the cell phones. Alex's cell phone, Maggie's cell phone, Paul's cell phone. You know, this is all amazing technology that most of us carry around in our pockets. It really allows us to do a lot of things and to get a lot done. But this cell phone keeps track of who we're talking to, who we're calling, who we're texting whenever we access apps. And every time you do that, there's a record kept in this phone unless it's deleted somehow. If you're using certain apps, you can even get GPS information where you were when you did that to store on these phones. You're gonna hear evidence about that. You're gonna hear evidence that when you make a call and it pings off of cell towers, that location information can be gathered from that as well. And so, it allows an investigation to take this and piece together what someone was doing on a particular day and not only what they were doing, but who they were interacting with and how they were interacting with them. That when you make a call and it pings off of cell towers, that location information can be gathered from that as well. And so, it allows an investigation to take this and piece together what someone was doing on a particular day and not only what they were doing, but who they were interacting with and how they were interacting with them. You're gonna hear that particularly Alex and Paul but also Maggie were prolific cell phone users to the point where Paul's friends even had a nickname for him about his cell phone usage.



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[00:26:12] **Liz Farrell:** Then, Creighton told the jurors about the layout of Moselle and how close the kennels were to the family's home.

[00:26:19] **Creighton Waters:** Moselle in Colleton County. It's called Moselle. It's off Moselle Road but everybody refers to it as Moselle. And that property is large. It has a lot of acres. There's a main house on it and there's a driveway that goes to that main house. But it used to be an airstrip and there's an airstrip that goes down. And then, down the way, just less than a third of a mile away, just a three-minute walk, four-minute walk, 45-second drive is the kennels and the shed that used to be a hangar where Paul and Maggie were murdered. So, the main house is just less than a third of a mile away. You can see the kennels from the main house. You can see the main house from the kennels.

[00:27:00] **Liz Farrell:** Then, he talks about the two driveways at Moselle. This will become important as we learn more about Alex's attempt to contact Maggie and his drive to his mother's house.

[00:27:09] **Creighton Waters:** Moselle that has the main house and the kennels-slash-sheds. The main house has a driveway but the kennels also have a driveway, and the evidence is gonna show that that was actually is commonly used as the main driveway. In fact, the mailbox is by the kennel driveway, driving right past those kennels with Paul and Maggie.

[00:27:31] **Liz Farrell:** This is where Alex's original alibi started to fall apart. His cell phone tattled on him.

[00:27:38] **Creighton Waters:** And the evidence is gonna show that she arrived about 8:15. And the evidence is gonna show that from the cell phones that Paul was there at the house, at the main house. Alex Murdaugh himself says that they ate dinner and the autopsy's gonna reflect both Paul and Maggie having similar stomach contents indicating that they recently shared a meal together. About 8:30, about 15 minutes after they arrived, Paul's phone starts moving towards the kennels. You're gonna hear evidence again that the



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defendant said he was never at those kennels, that he was napping after they ate and he was at the main house and never went there. You're also gonna hear evidence about how much Alex used his own cell phone and it would be unusual for him to be anywhere without his cell phone.

[00:28:39] **Liz Farrell:** This next part is chilling. There were just three minutes between when Paul took the video that captured Alex's voice and when Paul last interacted with his phone.

[00:28:50] **Creighton Waters:** At 8:44 and 55 seconds, Paul recorded a video. He was down at the kennels because he had been talking to a friend of his. And you're gonna hear from his friend because his friend's dog was in the kennels and they thought there was something wrong with the tail. Paul was recording a video of it to send to his friend. 8:44 and 55 seconds. And on that video, and you'll see that video and you'll hear from witnesses that identify Paul's voice, Maggie's voice, and Alex's voice. He told anyone who would listen he was never there. At 8:44 55 seconds, there's a video. The evidence will show that he was there. He was at the murder scene with the two victims. And more than that, just over three minutes later, 8:49 and one second, Paul's phone locks forever. He never reads another text. He never sends another text. He doesn't answer calls. Three minutes after that video has the defendant at the murder scene with the two victims. Paul's flip phone goes silent forever. And in fact, another communication comes into the very friend that he was talking to the dog at 8:49 and 35 seconds, just 35 seconds later, and he doesn't answer it. He never answers another thing forever and ever.

[00:30:45] **Mandy Matney:** This tight timeline really paints Alex into a corner. Three minutes. Now, Dick and Jim like to talk about what a happy night the three of them had together. They like to act as though a man cannot flip. But here's another thing to consider that Eric Bland brought up to us earlier. What if Alex was the family guy that night because he was lulling Maggie and Paul into a false sense of security?



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[00:31:12] **Creighton Waters:** On top of that, Maggie's phone locks at 8:49 and 31 seconds, around that same time, and she never answers another text. Never sends another text. Never makes another phone call. Never receives another phone call. Three minutes, ladies and gentlemen. Three minutes after a video shows he's at the scene with the victims and he told everybody he was never there. Credibility, ladies and gentlemen.

[00:31:49] **Mandy Matney:** We all know about Alex's credibility. The next thing Alex did, according to the State, is start to build his alibi. It again starts with his phone activity.

[00:32:01] **Creighton Waters:** So, what happens after that? Well, you'll hear evidence that Alex's phone was conspicuously didn't have a lot of activity from about 8:09 PM until 9:02 PM. And if he was at the kennels, which the evidence will show, why's his phone not? Why is it not showing activity? But you will hear that at 9:02, all of a sudden, his phone does start picking up activity. At 9:02, he calls, he starts moving. At 9:04, he calls Maggie's phone. Doesn't answer, of course. Doesn't answer. He calls his father, Randolph, who's in the hospital. Doesn't appear there's an answer there. He calls Maggie again at 9:06. Remember he's just a third of a mile away. You can see it. At 9:06, she doesn't answer. At 9:06, he turns on his car, the Suburban, and he texts Maggie that he's going — be right back. I'm gonna go check on mom. And he doesn't drive down to the kennels, even though that's where the mailbox is. That's a common place to be, even though you can see it. He's called his wife two times and texted her and she hasn't responded. Why didn't he just drive down there and say, "Hey, I'm heading. You guys wanna go?" What's up? What's up? Right there. You can see it.

[00:33:37] **Mandy Matney:** So, Alex's story is that he went to the house after the video that he apparently didn't know about was taken. Then, three minutes later, he called Maggie. Then, he called her again then texted her. Seems like he really wanted to get in touch with her, right? But then, he drives right past where she was and continues on to his mom's house. Again, Alex's phone appears to be telling on him.



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[00:34:07] **Creighton Waters:** Then drives to Alameda where his mom is suffering from Alzheimer's and the caretaker's there. And he starts calling people. He's talking people. It'll be up to you to decide whether or not he's trying to manufacture an alibi. He comes, he gets there to Alameda. You'll hear evidence about whether or not that was usual. You'll hear evidence about how he was acting when he got there. And he's only there for 20 minutes 'cause he's back underway at 9:44. And he makes more phone calls on the way back, calling friends, calling people who will answer. It'll be up to you to decide whether he's trying to create an alibi.

[00:34:55] **Mandy Matney:** Next, Creighton talks about some of the darker matters of this trial — the grizzly images. He warned the jury in a really compassionate way about what they will see as the trial progresses. Incidentally, Judge Newman ordered any image that shows Maggie and Paul's autopsies and Maggie and Paul's bodies to be sealed until after the trial.

[00:35:19] **Creighton Waters:** And you're gonna see what he did to Maggie and Paul. It's gonna be gruesome. There's no other way around it. It's what he did. You're gonna see crime scene photographs. You're gonna see the traumatic injuries that they suffered. You're gonna hear from a pathologist, a doctor who will examine the injuries. That's gonna be gruesome. No other way around it.

[00:35:51] **Liz Farrell:** So, remember what we said earlier about how it isn't clear whether Creighton will end up mentioning Alex's extensive alleged and admitted financial crimes? He was able to compensate for that quite nicely by saying the following:

[00:36:03] **Creighton Waters:** But he says within a few minutes of each one of those, he says, "This is about the boat case." This is about the boat case. And you're gonna hear some of what was going on in Alex Murdaugh's life leading up to that day, stuff that happened that very day, stuff that was leading up to



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a perfect storm that was gathering, much like the storms that are coming outside today.

[00:36:28] **Liz Farrell:** Finally, Creighton addressed one of Dick and Jim's main defenses about Alex: that SLED and the AG's Office couldn't solve the case, so they decided to blame it on Alex.

[00:36:39] **Creighton Waters:** This has been a long, exhaustive investigation and it's gonna be a fairly long trial 'cause it's complicated. It's a journey. There's a lot of aspects to this case. There's a lot of factors to this case. But like a lot of things that are complicated, when you start to put them all together, piece them together like a puzzle, all of a sudden, the picture emerges and it's really simple.

[00:37:07] **Liz Farrell:** That was pretty powerful, right? We'll be right back.

[00:37:13] **Mandy Matney:** Think of Big Creighton energy but the opposite of that. Get it? Okay. In all seriousness, I'm gonna start by saying that it is very obvious that I do not like Dick Harpootlian. I think he's arrogant. I think he's overhyped and over the hill. I think he was successful in a world that was made for men like him to succeed, which I am not impressed by. But my opinions about Dick do not matter here. What will matter are the jury's opinions. And to the jury, Dick wanted them to see a different Alex Murdaugh than the world is seeing. They wanted to see Alex the family man, Alex the loving husband, the Alex that Dick said he is honored to represent. You know, the Alex who admitted to stealing millions of dollars from his dead housekeeper's children — honored.

[00:38:11] **Dick Harpootlian:** Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, my name is Dick Harpootlian. I introduced myself to y'all and our attorneys, the three other attorneys, Jim Griffin, Phillip Barber, Margaret Fox. It is our honor to represent Alex Murdaugh, depending on how you pronounce it. I say it's our honor because I submit to you what you have heard from the Attorney General as facts are not. Are not. They're his theories, his conjecture. Now,



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stand up. This is Alex Murdaugh. And Alex was the loving father of Paul and the loving husband of Maggie. You're not gonna hear a single witness say that their relationship, Maggie and Alex's relationship, were anything other than loving. You're gonna hear about how they went to a baseball game the weekend before. You're gonna hear about their relationship. You're gonna see texts and emails indicating a loving relationship.

[00:39:37] **Mandy Matney:** So, here is the thing. I know of at least one witness who can testify with firsthand knowledge that Maggie and Alex's relationship was troubled. I don't know why Dick would say that no one would comment negatively about their relationship because there are over 200 potential witnesses. How would he know that? And this Alex that Dick is trying to show to the jury, Alex the family man, was seen laughing on video before the murders. This is the kind of proof that the defense plans on showing to paint this picture of Alex the family man, Alex the man who couldn't kill his wife and son.

[00:40:21] **Dick Harpootlian:** Paul, the apple of his eye, you're gonna see a video somewhere between 7:30 and 8:00 the night of the murders, with Paul and Alex, riding around looking at some trees they planted. It's a Snapchat that Paul sent to other people because the trees were not planted very well. They're kinda leaning over. They're laughing. They're having a good time. That would be about an hour before the Attorney General says he swatted them. When I say he swatted them, when they were swatted — and no question. Paul Murdaugh was shot twice with buckshot, 12-gauge buckshot, once in the chest. And by the way, that shot would indicate it was in the chest and came out under his arm, like somebody that might have been holding up their hands. So, when he says no defensive wounds, he perhaps is being held at shotgun. I mean, I can make the same sort of speculation that the Attorney General can because that's all he's doing is speculating. What we do know is 12-gauge, fairly close range shot to the chest. He must have been turned because it comes out under his arm. There's wadding, if you're familiar with a shotgun, under his arm.



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[00:41:46] **Mandy Matney:** So, this Snapchat video. On Friday, a court order was issued to secure witnesses from Snapchat and Google. The Snapchat in question was taken at 7:56 PM, according to the order. This is a different video from the one we have talked about before where Maggie, Paul, and Alex were apparently talking about a dog with a chicken in its mouth. In this Snapchat, which was about an hour before the murders, Alex and Paul were apparently sharing a nice father and son moment while looking at trees. But the question is "will that convince the jury that he could not have killed them? We will see. So then, Dick hones in on the motive or, as he claims, lack thereof. The defense's theory is basically how could Alex go from a guy laughing with his kid about trees to a psychotic son and wife killer? I was watching Alex during opening statements and to me, it appeared like he could turn on and off his emotions — robotically almost. It will be really interesting to see if the jury finds this authentic or offensive.

[00:42:58] **Dick Harpootlian:** Execute. Why? This is gonna be interesting because we don't know why. He doesn't know why. He's got theories of this and theories of that. But why, number one. Number two, what was it in that hour between when he's yucking it up with Paul — and let me say this to you, his record. He was interviewed. He comes home and finds — there's no question about this. They've got telemetry from his car. He left the house at 9:06, returns at 10:01 after seeing his mother who has dementia. Now, remember that day his father, who was dying, is taken to the hospital. Mom's home alone with the housekeeper. Perfectly reasonable for him to wanna go see her and later than usual because his father's not there. He's in the hospital. He dies two days later.

[00:44:00] **Mandy Matney:** Just wanna comment here about how they happened to leave Randolph out of the story for so long and now, the defense wants to mention him. We pointed this out in a previous MMP episode and we also pointed out that it was weird that Alex claimed to wake up from a nap and suddenly visited with his mother, not his dying father, at 9:00 PM at night. So now, Dick is suddenly giving an explanation for his late night visit to his mom's house, which is interesting, Dick.



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[00:44:34] **Dick Harpootlian:** So, the question is: if he leaves at 9:06 and he's back at 10:01, he literally — I mean, and he can account for cars and the cell phone records account for where he was between 9:06 and 10:01. Now, the cell phone records, and you're gonna hear this from their own experts, are incomplete. They're incomplete.

[00:44:55] **Mandy Matney:** What does he mean "incomplete?" That sounds really suspicious. And why does it matter if he was accounted for after Maggie and Paul were murdered? Dick's speech was a lot of swatting at evidence and distracting the jury. One thing was very clear about Dick's strategy. He wanted the jury to hear every horrific detail about the murders. He snuck in graphic descriptions and gruesome language about the murder scene with the family sitting right there and at nearly every chance he could. It was cringey and really hard to listen to. And honestly, we're not gonna play a lot of it because it was unnecessarily graphic. But here is the thing. The more horrific the crime, the more coldblooded and gory picture that he can paint for the jury. He thinks it will be harder for them to believe that this man, Alex Murdaugh, could do this to two people that he loved. But here's the thing that a source of mine brought up today. A lot of times, crimes of passion are more gruesome, so that strategy could be risky and frankly offensive to the jury.

[00:46:08] **Dick Harpootlian:** You wanna talk about GSR? Again, if you fired a shotgun twice and a rifle six times, you'd be covered in GSR. Those are the facts. That's not his theory. The facts. Now, let's talk a little bit about these ARs. Again, you're gonna hear testimony. A lot of guns. They had a gun room. You know, I don't live in Colleton County. I live in downtown Columbia. Ain't no gun rooms in downtown Columbia. But apparently, if you live on 1,100 acres and you hunt deer, you hunt whatever they were planting those sunflowers for, quail I guess. Big one. You have a lot of guns. The truth is in 2017, and you'll hear the testimony that Alex bought two Blackouts, one for Paul and one for Buster, his other son who's sitting out in the audience. And Paul had once his stolen. He bought another one for Paul. Now, Paul was very irresponsible with guns, cars. He'd leave guns around. He'd leave guns in cars. He oftentimes left guns down at the dog pens, in the field. Now, I can't tell you whether he was



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shot with his own weapon or not or his mom was shot with his weapon or not. But I can tell you that they were shot. They don't have the guns. There's no way to tell conclusively without having the weapons, what weapons those were fired by. And we'll be talking a little bit with the SLED experts about that.

[00:48:03] **Mandy Matney:** Did he just victim blame Paul for his own murder? Reminder Paul is Dick's former client. And on top of the super graphic descriptions of his murder, I really can't believe that he talked about a victim like this. Next, Dick got to the crux of his statement — well, sort of — that law enforcement picked on Alex Murdaugh, honed in on him with tunnel vision, and chipped away until they could find enough to charge him.

[00:48:37] **Dick Harpootlian:** The sort of overarching issue here is why — murder in June 7th, 2021, why is it September of 2022 before they charge him? And I will tell you what happened that night. And this is a problem. He's being, he's questioned and the questioning is pretty aggressive. You'll hear it. They're, he's traumatized. They suspect and he — they show up, he's got a shotgun. They suspect him. And the next morning, two people found butchered and here in Colleton County, Moselle Road. The police announced, don't worry. There's no danger to y'all. There's nobody out there that could pose a danger to you because you see, they decided that night he did it — without forensics, without cell phones, without any of that. And they've been pounding that square peg in the round hole for the last — since, you know, since June of 2021, resulting in charges in September of '22. And so, if he felt, and he did, and you'll hear it, the accusatory fashion he's being interviewed in, he may not have dealt all the facts. But by the way, whether he'd been down to the dog pens that night or not, really didn't matter. Really doesn't matter.

[00:50:16] **Mandy Matney:** Okay. A couple things here. I can tell you exactly where I was when Alex Murdaugh was charged with murder. It was Thursday, July 14th, 2022. I can tell you what was going on in my life in that week and the week leading up to it. I remember everything so vividly and Alex is not my client. Why did Dick say twice that Alex was charged with murder in September 2022? It is a strange mistake. Second, Dick needs to know that it



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does matter if Alex was near the dog kennels — the location where his wife and son were murdered — when he said that he was not there. That is a huge, huge red flag. And "that doesn't matter" is not a good enough explanation for a jury.

[00:51:07] **Dick Harpootlian:** Because you're gonna see cell phone activity that would be — let me put it to you this way. Paul's phone 8:50. Maggie's phone later than that 8:54 clearly is still being used. At 9:06, he's up at the house, getting in the car, cranking it up to drive over and see his mom. He says a few hundred yards away. It's a little bit further than that. But the point of the matter is he would've had to have executed both of them, got back up to the house, got the bloody clothes off — and by the way, they seized his clothing that night. They'd never searched his house for any other clothes that we know of, although that night he gave permission and they got a search warrant. Go to my house. Go look through everything. Where are the bloody clothes? Where are the bloody clothes? And, of course, I would tell you that they weed-woven this story together because they want everything to be consistent. What's important about that is the judge — and by the way, there's no eyewitness, there's no forensics tying him to the murder. When I say "forensics," fingerprints, blood, whatever tying him to shooting anybody that night. The cell phone records would indicate he would've had less than 10 minutes to kill them, get up to the house, get in the car, and crank it up, and be covered in blood.

[00:52:41] **Mandy Matney:** So, this is where the defense is going to use the timeline to their advantage. One thing we were told last April by sources close to the investigation was that it was clear to investigators that this was not the work of a professional because of how messy the crime scene was. It's not hard to believe that someone could have shot Maggie and Paul at the kennels, gotten into his vehicle, driven to the main house to gather his thoughts and formulate a plan, and then kick that plan into action in that timeframe. Alex was a lawyer. He was predisposed to knowing what needed to be done. Also, he likely was not expecting anyone but Colleton County Sheriff's Office to investigate this, putting that investigation into his realm of



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control as a member of the 14th Circuit Solicitor's Office. But as far as the bloody clothes go, that is just Dick trying to chess-move Creighton into bringing the blood spatter back into play. Dick knows that the blood spatter is a sticky issue and one that could confuse the jury. So, in a way, he might just wish for Creighton to tell the jury about it. And speaking of evidence, in making his point about SLED unjustly accusing Alex, Dick seemed to hint at witness tampering, which is wild. It was quickly shut down, but listen.

[00:54:10] **Dick Harpootlian:** They've ignored some witnesses. I mean, for instance, that blue tarp with a, showed up with a blue tarp. That witness who said he showed up with a blue tarp was shown a blue rain jacket that he talked about. Said that's not it. That's not what he brought here that morning. I mean, I've talked to her. She says, no, no, no. It was a blue tarp and what was —

[00:54:38] **Creighton Waters:** I object to him testifying, Your Honor.

[00:54:40] **Judge Clifton Newman:** Objection, sustained.

[00:54:43] **Dick Harpootlian:** I would indicate —

[00:54:45] **Judge Clifton Newman:** Objection sustained. You may proceed.

[00:54:47] **Dick Harpootlian:** I would tell you that the testimony you're going to hear is inconsistent with the Attorney General's represented to you based on interviews done by people other than me.

[00:54:57] **Mandy Matney:** So, that was weird. And here is how Dick concluded his opening statement by telling the jury that this is simple.

[00:55:06] **Dick Harpootlian:** Now, all of you have indicated that you will follow the law. And I say this one last time. He didn't do it. He didn't kill, butcher, his



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son and wife. And you need to put from your mind any suggestion that he did.

[00:55:29] **Mandy Matney:** And we will be right back.

[00:55:37] **Liz Farrell:** These opening statements were given in front of 18 men and women and that's 12 jurors plus six alternates who were chosen Wednesday afternoon after two long days of jury qualification. Here's the breakdown on who will be deciding on Alex's guilt or innocence. Of the 12 jurors, eight of them are women and four of them are men. Two of them are Black and 10 are white. Both Black jurors are women. Four of the alternates are men and two are women. Three of the alternates are Black. Two of those are women and one is a man. And the three other alternates are white men. About half of the potential jurors who showed up were women and half were men. About 70% appeared to be white, which is disproportionate to the county's white population of around 60%, and 30% appeared to be people of color. According to the census, the population of Black, Hispanic, and indigenous people in Colleton County is actually closer to 40%. Six of the jurors chosen claimed never to have heard of the Murdaughs or the murder case. Juror number five works for Chevrolet and said she once sold a truck to Lee Cope, who is one of Alex's former partners at PMPED. Alternate number five said one of the witnesses is his brother. He told the judge that if his brother did testify, it would not influence his opinion one way or another. Juror number four is interesting. She had admitted to having already formed an opinion of Alex's guilt or innocence and sharing that opinion with family members, but she told the judge she could put that opinion aside and be convinced by the evidence instead. We are not sure why the defense did not strike her. The process of whittling down the jury took three days, which was around what we were told to expect. Typically, Colleton County calls up about 250 people for jury duty, according to Clerk of Court, Becky Hill. For this trial though, she called up about 900 people but only about 300 showed up. She says that the 66% no-show rate is typical, meaning if we were at all tempted to read into this as a sign that people had defied their jury orders because they in no way wanted to serve on the Murdaugh jury, we would be wrong. Now,



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there were four panels of jurors of about 65-70 each. And the biggest questions they were asked were about the Murdaughs, PMPED, and the witness list, which we'll talk about in a minute. At the beginning of each panel, the judge asked Alex to stand in front of the jurors. He greeted them with a quick good morning or a good afternoon and the last panel actually greeted him back. Incidentally, eight out of the 18 jurors and alternates ended up being from that last panel. When the potential jurors were asked to stand if they had heard about this case, just about every person stood. It wasn't surprising but the first time it happened, it caused a stir and might be part of the reason Alex sat with his back to the jury for much of the qualification phase. That or maybe he was excited to finally have some time to play FreeCell on Jim's computer like he probably did in the good old days when he would sit in his PMPED office and pretend to be giving his clients their money. Even though most people in the jury pool said they had heard about the case, we somehow ended up with six of the 12 jurors claiming not to have known anything about the case in Colleton County. And one of the six alternates also claimed not to have known anything about the case. It's really hard not to be suspicious of this but we are keeping an open mind.

[00:59:31] **Mandy Matney:** During jury selection, Newman named 255 people as potential witnesses to testify. It took 12 minutes for him to read all of the names, which he had to do four times to the four different panels. The witness list gave us a rough outline for the story that both the prosecution and the defense will tell in the next few weeks. Liz and I, with the help of our MMP Premium army, have been chipping away at this list, searching our old text messages, texting our sources, and, of course, we did a little bit of social media stalking so we could get a better picture of what stories each side will tell. Now, to start, not all the witnesses will be called but both sides can subpoena new witnesses throughout the process. 33 of those names on the list are defense-only witnesses, meaning only the defense want those people to help them tell the jury the story they want the jury to hear.

[01:00:30] **Liz Farrell:** According to the list, if the defense decides to present their case, they plan to call Buster John Marvin and John Marvin's wife, Liz.



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You might remember her from her flirty calls with Alex from the bathtub. It's going to be interesting to see what Buster and John Marvin can say while still under oath. These aren't the old days when no one talked about the Murdaugh family except quietly and to each other. Like we said, we think a big part of Dick and Jim's defense will center around this notion that Maggie and Alex were the happiest of happy couples at the time of her death. From what our sources have told us though, everyone in the family knew that Alex and Maggie's relationship was on the rocks. They knew of Alex's alleged affairs and they knew that Maggie was unhappy with Alex. So, what could the family possibly say that would help Alex in that regard?

[01:01:17] Another curious thing about the witness list. Randy Murdaugh, who still works at PMPED or as it's called now, the Parker Law Group, is listed as a potential witness for both sides, which is weird that he's the only family member who is listed for both sides, right? We've also been wondering about Maggie's family. We know that Alex stayed with them during the weeks following the murders and I can't imagine how hard this must be for them. Their son-in-law and brother-in-law is accused of murdering their daughter-slash-sister and grandson-slash-nephew. It doesn't get much worse than that but their silence has been noticeable. Are they gonna show up for Maggie at some point and demand justice or are they supporting Alex? Or maybe they're withholding judgment until they see the evidence. Whatever the reason, Maggie's family might have to be in the courtroom to testify because they, too, are on the list. Maggie's sister and her husband are on both lists and Maggie's parents are listed on the defense-only list. Let's not forget how hard Alex was working to make sure Maggie's family knew he wanted flowers on Maggie's grave for Valentine's Day and Mother's Day. Let's not forget how much he pestered Buster to put him in touch with Grandma and Papa T. He really wanted to talk to them. According to our sources, Alex finally did contact Maggie's parents and Maggie's parents seemed to believe like Alex was telling them that he was being set up by SLED. We have a lot more to talk about when it comes to the witness list and we're going to be sharing our findings with our premium subscribers so you can find more information through our subscription platform.



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[01:03:03] **Mandy Matney:** To end our show today, we wanna take a second to talk about momentum of the past couple days. This is going to be a long trial — long for South Carolina anyway. And even though we think the State has had some pretty major wins so far, we know that Creighton has an uphill battle ahead of him. No matter what decision gets made about the blood spatter or talking about the financial crimes and despite the fact that the State doesn't have to prove that Alex had a motive to kill, we believe that the jury is going to need some sort of explanation for why he did it if he did it. As we have said before, it's going to be really hard for people who don't know Alex or of Alex to wrap their heads around how a man could kill his own wife and son. This means Creighton is going to have to not only show that Alex could physically do this but that he was also mentally capable of it; that he was and is a sociopath who, in a moment of panic with a history of having stupid ideas that do not end well, thought that the best answers to his problems would be eliminating his wife and the son she protected. If the past three days are any indication, we're about to get a lot of answers to the questions that we have been asking about the Murdaugh family for years. And it is about time. Stay tuned and stay in the sunlight.

[01:04:36] **Outro:** The Murdaugh Murders Podcast is created and hosted by me, Mandy Matney, produced by my husband, David Moses. And Liz Farrell is our executive editor. From Luna Shark Productions.