



EPISODE 88: Alex Murdaugh's Pawn: Eddie Smith Is Out of Jail But Still Caught in the Middle

[00:00:00] **Mandy Matney:** I don't know what will happen to Curtis Eddie Smith or if we will ever figure out what his role was in all of this mess. But after Alex Murdaugh's murder trial, it's now more clear than ever that Eddie is yet another victim of the two-tiered system of justice that benefited Alex for so many years. My name is Mandy Matney. I have been investigating the Murdaugh family for more than four years. This is the Murdaugh Murders Podcast produced by my husband David Moses and written with journalist Liz Farrell, who is actually recording from Iceland this week.

[00:00:59] I wanna start off this episode by saying a much-needed thank you to you, the fans. We've been going at a hundred miles per hour for almost two years now, and y'all have been with us for all of the crazy twists and turns. You've been patient with us. You have been kind to us. You have shared with us how the podcast has changed you or helped you in different ways. And I just wanna tell you how much I appreciate you, our listeners, from those who started in June 2021 to those who have impressively binged over 80 episodes since first hearing about us during the trial. You know, there was a time about a year ago where I could hardly envision a future in this. I could barely get through each episode each week and was really just trying to keep my head above water with the constant flood of breaking news hitting us every day. For several months there, I did not see this podcast going past 2022. It was just too much. But now, the worst is over. Now that we've made it through the trolls and the muck and we've found a rhythm and a routine that is healthy and doable, the future of both of our shows is looking really bright. I was in a meeting the other day and was told that only 1% of podcasters are able to make a living off of their shows. This really hit me what a unique position we are in and how lucky we are to be doing these shows for y'all every single week. And that's because of you, our listeners, looking past our flaws in the beginning, encouraging us to keep going, listening to every single episode — sometimes multiple times — and signing up for MMP Premium and attending our YouTube Lives. You all have made this doable and healthy. You have made the future bright for us. And more importantly, we're now encouraging other young journalists to do the same thing — to expose the truth, to give a voice to the victims, to get the story straight. We are showing them that they don't have to sell their souls to be successful. We are showing the younger generation that you can do work that is meaningful and powerful and you can make a living off of it, and that is a big deal.



EPISODE 88: Alex Murdaugh's Pawn: Eddie Smith Is Out of Jail But Still Caught in the Middle

[00:03:24] And speaking of things that are a big deal, The Sheryl Crow joined us on Cup of Justice this week. Be sure to check that episode out. And again, just a reminder, it's on its own feed wherever you get your podcast. The episode came out on Monday. And later this week, we will be posting a full video to MMP premium members, so you can see all of our stunned facial expressions. I think I speak for the entire team when I say it was an absolutely surreal experience. All of us are huge fans of Sheryl, and we were shocked that she wasn't just an occasional listener of MMP. She's an actual fan who knew the entire story and all of the names involved, big and small. I wanna play a short clip for you now.

[00:04:11] **Sheryl Crow:** Anyway, I'm super big fans and I just appreciate. I mean, just, I just appreciate what you guys not only have done, but the fact that you are so committed to bringing justice. And, oh my gosh. Stephen Smith? I've been crying all the way through that. I mean, if that were my kid, I have kids, and if that was my kid, I don't know what I — I mean, I don't know how Sandy's doing it. So I just appreciate that you guys are advocating for her and that you're, you know, just taking on the system. Anyway, I love you guys. That's all I'm saying.

[00:04:42] **Mandy Matney:** And I think my favorite part of the whole interview was when she talked about Sandy Smith's fight for justice.

[00:04:49] **Sheryl Crow:** I agree with that. And I, you know, like with Sandy, I think what's permeating everything right now where Sandy is concerned where Stephen's concerned will, you know, it's not — it's humanizing, you know? You see this mom who for eight years has been, you know, just grappling with the grief of not only losing a son, but not having the opportunity to even really know what happens. And I feel like because of what you guys are doing and because of the story because of the opportunity that she's having to speak as a real person as a person who's still in mourning who's painting a picture of a darling boy who was well loved, you know, that somebody is going to come forward. I just feel like it's too — the weight of knowing what really happened to him, hopefully and with Sandy and how



EPISODE 88: Alex Murdaugh's Pawn: Eddie Smith Is Out of Jail But Still Caught in the Middle

much people are loving her from afar, you know, all over the world, that the weight of that will compel someone to speak up.

[00:06:06] **Mandy Matney:** I loved that Sheryl said that. We all feel that, and we want that for Sandy and for the Smith family — that someone comes forward with information. I'll say this again. We know that there are people out there who know what happened to Stephen, and we wanna keep reminding them that this story will never fade. We will keep fighting for Stephen as long as it takes. Keep sharing the Green Day for Justice squares on social, and if you have information that could help the police — and information not theories — please send it to tips@sled.sc.gov or call 803-737-9000. Remember there is a \$35,000 reward for anyone who gives information that leads police to an arrest in the case. And while Eric Bland and Sandy Smith have promised as much transparency as possible with the independent investigation, I do wanna warn you that there might be a period of time without any new information, and that is a good thing. We believe that SLED is making progress with the case, and that this is a time where it matters most to keep information tight. So be patient. Keep sharing the GoFundMe page. Keep showing your support for Stephen. But please know unless we tell you otherwise that SLED and a group of experts are working diligently to get answers for Sandy and for Stephen. And as soon as we can give an update that will not compromise the investigation, we will do that.

[00:07:46] **Liz Farrell:** As we promised last week, we're going to talk about Curtis Eddie Smith today. But first, we wanted to update you on Russell "Can't Seem to Admit Defeat" Laffitte. On Monday, Judge Richard Gergel again denied Russell's request for a new trial. This should be 0% surprising to anyone with eyes, ears, and common sense. As you'll remember, this was Russell's second motion for a new trial. The first time, he was requesting a new trial based on Judge Richard Gergel's decision to allow two alternate jurors to sub out for two jurors, one of whom said she was being bullied about her position and the other one who said she needed medication. The judge issued a scathing 42-page denial of that motion in which he scolded Russell's second defense team for chiming in and arguing ineffective counsel, likening it to a request for a do-over simply because Russell didn't like the outcome



EPISODE 88: Alex Murdaugh's Pawn: Eddie Smith Is Out of Jail But Still Caught in the Middle

the first time around. In this second motion for a new trial, Russell was using Alex Murdaugh's murder trial testimony as evidence that Russell was innocent and as an argument that he deserved a second trial. To recap, here is what Alex had to say about Russell.

[00:09:07] **Creighton Waters:** Which part of what I just asked you about the Plylers do you take issue with? Do you take issue that y'all didn't conspire to do that, you and Russell? You take issue with that?

[00:09:14] **Alex Murdaugh:** Yes.

[00:09:15] **Creighton Waters:** You take issue with that. Okay.

[00:09:16] **Alex Murdaugh:** I can tell you that Russell Laffitte never conspired with me to do anything. Whatever was done was done by me.

[00:09:25] **Creighton Waters:** Okay.

[00:09:26] **Alex Murdaugh:** I've seen I believe an email or a text to that effect.

[00:09:31] **Creighton Waters:** So you don't dispute that?

[00:09:33] **Alex Murdaugh:** No, I don't dispute that. What I dispute is if you're insinuating in any way — this was stuff that I did.

[00:09:42] **Creighton Waters:** Okay.

[00:09:42] **Alex Murdaugh:** I mean, this is stuff that I — I did these things wrong. Russell Laffitte didn't do anything.

[00:09:49] **Creighton Waters:** I'm not here to talk about that. I'm just talking about what went on.



EPISODE 88: Alex Murdaugh's Pawn: Eddie Smith Is Out of Jail But Still Caught in the Middle

[00:09:52] **Alex Murdaugh:** And I know, but you keep talking about what I did with Russell Laffitte and what I wanna let you know is that I did this.

[00:09:58] **Creighton Waters:** I know.

[00:09:59] **Alex Murdaugh:** And I'm the one that took people's money that I shouldn't have taken, and that Russell Laffitte was not involved in helping me do that.

[00:10:07] **Creighton Waters:** I just asked you a simple question.

[00:10:09] **Alex Murdaugh:** Knowingly. If he did it, he did it without knowing it.

[00:10:12] **Liz Farrell:** If he did it, he did it without knowing? Girl, he did it. Russell himself said he did it. His defense was that he was sloppy. Anyway, immediately after Alex, quote unquote, exonerated Russell during his murder trial, Russell's new attorneys jumped right on it. They were like, see? We told you Russell didn't do this. On March 23rd, the government filed a response to this new motion. They were like, oh my God. You guys cannot be serious about this. First: case law is pretty clear here. This isn't newly discovered evidence. You guys knew Alex would say this. You literally tried to get Alex on the stand to say this during Russell's trial, but Alex wouldn't do it because he didn't wanna admit to stealing on the stand, at least not to help Russell. He had no problem doing it to save his own behind. And second: Alex says so? Oh, okay. Something tells us that if the government could file a response to that motion that was just a stream of LOLs, they totally would've done that. Instead, they submitted a well-reasoned response that broke down each of Russell's six counts and showed how Alex's testimony was either incongruent, irrelevant, unbelievable, or all three. After that, Russell's new defense team was like, excuse you. Our motion was seven pages and your response was 15 pages. So booyah! You're protesting too much, which means we were right. Russell's reply argues that the government can't say that Alex is not a credible witness when they sure do think he was credible when he was admitting to his financial crimes on the stand and might even try to use that testimony against him, which Alex hasn't been charged federally, so that's a bit of a



EPISODE 88: Alex Murdaugh's Pawn: Eddie Smith Is Out of Jail But Still Caught in the Middle

stretch. But also, his testimony about the financial crimes isn't even sufficient to convict him on those crimes at the state level. The state has to actually try those cases on their own merits. Russell's attorneys also argued that Russell can't have conspired with someone who hasn't been indicted in the conspiracy. They seem to hint that Alex's testimony is new and not newly discovered as the government argued because the government didn't even name Alex in Russell's indictment and instead referred to him only as, quote, bank customer until the trial. For a second, it seemed like Russell's defense team was saying, how could we have known for sure the government was talking about Alex if Alex's name doesn't appear in the indictment? And therefore, how could we have known what Alex was going to say?

[00:12:51] Anyway, on Monday, Judge Gergel was like, chuckle, chuckle. You again? The judge issued a six-page order and in it referenced Judge Clifton Newman's words during Alex murder trial, quote, while sentencing Murdaugh, the presiding judge, South Carolina Circuit Judge Clifton Newman, stated that Murdaugh had engaged in duplicitous conduct here in the courtroom and that the jury concluded that he had lied throughout his testimony. Here is David with the best part of Judge Gergel's denial.

[00:13:23] **David Moses:** The court finds that Murdaugh is manifestly not a credible witness. Evidence offered during the defendant's trial established without question that Murdaugh is a serial liar and fraudster who stole from his clients and law partners. He now stands convicted of the double homicide of his wife and son. It is difficult to imagine a less credible witness under these circumstances.

[00:13:55] **Liz Farrell:** As to Russell's argument that his team didn't know what Alex would testify to in Russell's trial, Judge Gergel was like, you know. Russell's team needed to show that Alex's testimony — this, quote, new evidence — would've most likely resulted in Russell's acquittal, and Judge Gergel was like, in what world?

[00:14:15] Anyway, here is a quick summary of how Russell has found himself here at this very scary doorstep of his sentencing, which should be coming



EPISODE 88: Alex Murdaugh's Pawn: Eddie Smith Is Out of Jail But Still Caught in the Middle

soon. He requested a speedy trial in the hopes that he'd be forcing the government's hand and that the government would be like, you got us. We were bluffing. Spoiler alert. They were not bluffing. Then, he tried to get Alex to testify on his behalf — Alex of all people. When Alex wouldn't, Russell got John Marvin Murdaugh to get up on the stand and be like, Russell is amazing because I say so. Then, Russell got on the stand and was like, yeah, I did all that, but I'm just a really nice country boy who wasn't really friends with Alex, even though I trusted him enough to break the law for him apparently. But I didn't know I was doing anything criminal. In the meantime, Russell published two bootleg episodes of Russell TV on YouTube in which he was interviewed by his cousin, so he could proclaim his innocence and give a lumpy explanation for how he has had such bad luck by being a simple, trusting farmer this whole time. One of the episodes was released right before jury selection. The other was released during the trial. Then, when he was found guilty, he hired a second team of attorneys to handle his appeal but that second team of attorneys decided to attend the motion for a new trial party and dump on the first team of attorneys by preemptively arguing ineffective counsel, which irritated the judge further. All the while, Russell has repeatedly maintained that he has cooperated with investigators. And every time, they've been like, really? When? He has had his wife give a speech to the judge, threw his own family members under the bus, and snapped at the female prosecutor from the stand. Then, he decided that a man who would murder his wife and son would be just the ticket to get him a new trial. That is why we're calling him Russell "Can't Admit Defeat" Laffitte. It is a reminder of how hard it is to hold men like these accountable. They never accept consequences ever. They will push women and children out of the way to get to the lifeboat first. They will deny, deny, deny until the very end. They do not care who they hurt.

[00:16:39] **Mandy Matney:** Which brings us to one of the many people that Alex has used to escape his consequences: Curtis Eddie Smith.

[00:16:52] We'll be right back.



EPISODE 88: Alex Murdaugh's Pawn: Eddie Smith Is Out of Jail But Still Caught in the Middle

[00:16:58] Last week, we told you about Eddie's bond reconsideration hearing in front of Judge Clifton Newman. The hearing was held in the Richland County Courthouse, and as you might remember, the acoustics in that courtroom are pretty bad, so we will just summarize what happened quickly. One of Eddie's attorneys, Aimee Zmroczek, told Judge Newman two things. One is that Eddie has gained a significant amount of weight since being jailed in August 2022 and that is because of a medical issue. The second is that Eddie has been fully cooperative with law enforcement. We're gonna talk about that, but let's start at the beginning because the beginning is the most important part of all of this.

[00:17:43] We first learned of Eddie Smith in the aftermath of Alex's Labor Day weekend incident in 2021, and from the start, we knew that something was very wrong here. Like we said, we are still trying to figure out Eddie's role in all of this, but there are big pieces that we think have become pretty clear. So Eddie or Cousin Eddie, as some people call him because of his distant relation to the Murdaugh family, is in his sixties. And it's somewhat fitting because like Randy Quaid's character in the movies, Eddie Smith is not at all on the same socioeconomic level as Alex Murdaugh. He is rougher, less educated, not at all wealthy, and has very little power in all of this. Eddie, who lives in Colleton County, the county that convicted Alex of murdering his wife and son, does not have a violent criminal record to speak of, at least he doesn't have one that appears in the public index.

[00:18:47] In the 14th Circuit, when discussing the Murdaughs and anyone in their realm, we just wanna remind people that Alex and his family were the law here for decades. They decided whose crimes got prosecuted and whose didn't. To this day, people are reluctant to speak out against the family because of the help that they received or family members received when it came to charges.

[00:19:11] So like we said, according to the public index, Eddie Smith has no violent criminal record to speak of. But he was represented by Alex Murdaugh in at least two civil cases, one of which was related to an injury Eddie received while working in the timber industry. In that case, the defendant's insurance



EPISODE 88: Alex Murdaugh's Pawn: Eddie Smith Is Out of Jail But Still Caught in the Middle

company's attorney filed a notice with the court in 2015 to report that they had paid out the settlement, but that Alex had not disbursed it. Eddie is not one of the clients that Alex had been charged with stealing from, but at the time of his bond revocation hearing last August, it was brought up that Eddie had more money than he had reported to the court. That money, he said, was from another settlement and a case that Alex represented him in. So that is Eddie and his relationship with Alex. Also, there's the check-cashing to the tune of more than \$2 million over more than a decade, but especially in the last few years since the boat crash. And then, there's the alleged roadside shooting, which brings us to now.

[00:20:21] A lot of new information has come out about Eddie's case since we last spoke about it in early January. During Alex Murdaugh's trial, Eddie Smith was on the witness list for the prosecution and lots of talking heads were anticipating his testimony to be explosive. Eddie apparently was going to testify about what Alex said to him on the side of Salkehatchie Road on September 4th, 2021. According to sources, before Alex asked Eddie to shoot him or whatever happened that day, Eddie asked Alex what happened at Moselle on June 7th, 2021, and Alex's response was, quote, it all got effed up. During jury selection, Dick Harpootlian was in the courtroom talking to reporters during one of the breaks, and he wanted everyone around him to know that he was hoping that he would get the chance to cross-examine Eddie on the stand. At the time, this seemed to be because the defense had done their absolute best in pretrial filings and hearings to try to pin the murders on Eddie Smith. But now that we've learned more about what actually went down on Old Salkehatchie Road and in the days and weeks after, we have to wonder if that was all for show; if Dick was actually worried because of what Eddie might say. Ultimately, the prosecution never called Eddie to the stand, likely because his testimony was too risky and wasn't enough to make or break the prosecution's case. Eddie is Eddie — someone who is purely himself and just trying to get by. And even though that might have resonated with some of the jury members, it's still not clear if Eddie would've been seen as credible.



EPISODE 88: Alex Murdaugh's Pawn: Eddie Smith Is Out of Jail But Still Caught in the Middle

[00:22:14] But during the trial, Judge Newman did allow Ryan Kelly, the SLED agent who led the investigation into the alleged roadside shooting, to testify about the incident. Kelly, by the way, is also working on Stephen Smith's case now. He was present at the exhumation and seemed intent on solving Stephen's case. During Kelly's testimony, we learned a lot more about what went on in the investigation between September 4th, 2021 and the day Alex was finally arrested — September 16th, 2021. I re-listened to Kelly's testimony this week, and I learned a lot listening to it for a second time. It's honestly unbelievable to see how much grace they gave Alex Murdaugh, especially now knowing that he's a murderer. During the trial, the prosecution played a bodycam video that we hadn't seen before from September 4th. It shows Alex speaking to police in an ambulance after he called 911 and reported that he had been shot. I'm gonna play this clip. This is what Alex told police happened that day.

[00:23:28] **Police:** Tell me — tell me more than —

[00:23:30] **Alex Murdaugh:** I'm going down the road. Had a tire run flat. I pulled over and this car went by me and didn't pay a lot of attention truck but then it turned around and came back. Real nice guy — acted like. And I turned my head and, I mean, boom.

[00:23:54] **Police:** Okay. You know what kind of gun it was?

[00:23:56] **Alex Murdaugh:** I don't know what kind of gun it was, but it sounded like a shotgun even though. I mean, it was so loud. It didn't sound like a .22. I know that's what they think it is, but it didn't sound like a .22.

[00:24:10] **Police:** It looks like a small caliber. Small caliber. Yeah, small caliber.

[00:24:17] **Alex Murdaugh:** But it was extremely loud.

[00:24:19] **Mandy Matney:** Now, this was taken soon after the incident, and just like the 911 call, Alex does not sound like he had been shot at all. Kelly



EPISODE 88: Alex Murdaugh's Pawn: Eddie Smith Is Out of Jail But Still Caught in the Middle

testified that he first met Alex at Savannah Memorial Hospital where Alex was airlifted to after the shooting.

[00:24:39] **Ryan Kelly:** Yes. When we arrived in the hospital, Mr. Murdaugh was receiving treatment. He was awake and willing to talk to us. At that point, he was the only witness to this incident. We asked him what happened, and he told us a story that was consistent with the 911 call and with what was told to the deputy.

[00:24:58] **Creighton Waters:** Alright. And did he state that a driver had stopped, passed by, turned around, and came back to the location?

[00:25:05] **Ryan Kelly:** Yes. He said a similar story that he was driving along Old Salkehatchie; that he hit something significant with his tire causing it to go flat. So when he pulled over to the side of the road to inspect the tire, it was flat. As he was doing that, he said a dark in color Chevy pickup truck drove by, passed him, turned around, and came back to his location. He said he made contact with the driver, and as Mr. Murdaugh turned around to walk back to his vehicle, he said the driver then shot him.

[00:25:36] **Mandy Matney:** So that was September 4th. And September 5th, the very next day, probably much to Alex's surprise, SLED followed up and checked the scene to see if there was any significant debris in the area, like Alex said there was. And while looking for this mysterious object that managed to deflate Alex's run flat tires — surprise. They found something else.

[00:26:03] **Ryan Kelly:** On September 5th, we agents returned to the scene. We were looking for any evidence of involved in the accident. We were looking for the significant piece of debris. And as we were searching the roadway around where the Mercedes had pulled off, we searched across the street in the grass area and we recovered a gray in color utility knife.



EPISODE 88: Alex Murdaugh's Pawn: Eddie Smith Is Out of Jail But Still Caught in the Middle

[00:26:25] **Creighton Waters:** Did law enforcement — did you notice any sort of debris or anything like had been described by the defendant as supposedly causing the damage to the tire?

[00:26:32] **Ryan Kelly:** No. We searched the area extensively and we never were able to locate this significant piece of debris that Mr. Murdaugh described as causing his tire to go flat.

[00:26:41] **Creighton Waters:** I'll show you what's been marked as State's 546. And do you recognize that image?

[00:26:45] **Ryan Kelly:** Yes, I do.

[00:26:46] **Creighton Waters:** And tell the jury what that is, please.

[00:26:47] **Ryan Kelly:** That is the folding knife that was recovered across the road from where Mr. Murdaugh's vehicle was parked.

[00:26:54] **Mandy Matney:** I just wanna say this part again because it is crazy. They found the knife directly across the road in the grass from where Alex's Mercedes was parked. Remember when Maggie's cellphone was tossed in the grass outside of Moselle? We've said this before, but it seems like it's a trend for someone who isn't used to being questioned. Anyway, they found the knife on September 5th. The knife eventually was shown to have both Alex and Eddie's DNA on it, according to Kelly. We're not really sure how Eddie's DNA ended up on the knife, and it could have been Eddie's knife that Alex used. Investigators believe that the knife was used to deflate Alex's tire. We aren't exactly sure how Eddie's DNA got on the knife, but it is possible that Alex borrowed Eddie's knife previously when he was doing handiwork for him, and he used it in this as a part of the setup. So while the investigation was definitely pointed in the Alex-did-this direction, the Murdaugh PR team appeared to be on a mission to evoke sympathy for Alex in the public. They released a statement where he admitted for the first time to his drug addiction and he claimed that he was resigning from the law firm when in



EPISODE 88: Alex Murdaugh's Pawn: Eddie Smith Is Out of Jail But Still Caught in the Middle

reality, he was allowed to resign days before that because he was caught stealing. I'll have David read that statement from Alex's PR team.

[00:28:29] **David Moses:** The murders of my wife and son have caused an incredibly difficult time in my life. I have made a lot of decisions that I truly regret, Murdaugh said in a statement through his lawyer, Dick Harpootlian for *Live 5 News*. I'm resigning from my law firm and entering rehab after a long battle that has been exacerbated by these murders. I am immensely sorry to everyone I've hurt, including my family, friends, and colleagues. I ask for prayers as I rehabilitate myself and my relationships.

[00:29:03] **Liz Farrell:** It is really crazy to hear that now that Alex has been convicted of murdering his family all to distract from his financial crimes. So at this point, September 6th, SLED knew that Alex was the number one suspect for the murders of his wife and son. SLED knew that he had been caught stealing millions of dollars from his law firm. They knew that the story Alex was telling them about the shooting was not adding up. But yet on that very same day, September 6th, after they found the knife that blew Alex's story apart, SLED sent agents and a sketch artist to Savannah Memorial Hospital. And what did Alex do? Continue to point the finger at a fictional character. Alex provided the details of his alleged shooter to a sketch artist. This would mean that SLED on some level was humoring Alex and his description of the, quote, very nice-looking man who shot him. You know, the sketch that looked suspiciously like Anthony Cook whose girlfriend died because of Paul Murdaugh who is literally on camera that night yelling at Paul in 2019 that he hoped Paul would rot in jail? It seems like Alex was using that to perhaps set up Anthony Cook, knowing that nothing would come of it.

[00:30:19] But September 6th was also when Eddie's name was first brought up to investigators. We learned in trial that Alex's brother Randy Murdaugh called Special Agent Ryan Kelly. It was strange then, and it's strange now. Randy told SLED about the phone calls that Alex was trying to make from the hospital, and the defense presented this as though Randy was simply a man concerned about his druggie brother and was trying to help SLED figure out what the heck was going on here. Remember Randy was Alex's law partner at



EPISODE 88: Alex Murdaugh's Pawn: Eddie Smith Is Out of Jail But Still Caught in the Middle

that time — well, sort of. Alex had resigned. And Alex not only was stealing from the firm and the firm's clients, but he had also stolen about \$125,000 from Randy years earlier, according to testimony from PMPED's CFO Jeanne Seckinger. Just a day before this alleged shooting, Randy had been told about what Lee Cope, Ronnie Crosby, Mark Ball, and Jeanne Seckinger had found about Alex's alleged financial crimes. And remember that very shortly after the murder verdict was delivered, Randy appeared in a profile piece in the *New York Times*, not quite saying his brother was guilty, but also not quite saying he was innocent. The piece read like an attempt at self-preservation, honestly. So this phone call from Randy to SLED about Alex's mysterious behavior and phone calls from the hospital — was this truly because Randy, who allegedly had no idea at that time that Alex had a drug problem, thought that his brother was calling a dealer and seeking drugs? Or was it something else? Was it the beginning of Eddie getting thrown under the bus? Was Alex calling Eddie because he needed a fix, as the defense seemed to suggest in court? Or was Alex calling Eddie because he sensed that SLED, who had already told Alex that they didn't believe his story about the murders, also wasn't buying this random shooter story either? Was Alex trying to warn Eddie, so that they could coordinate stories about what had happened? Because Alex really wanted to get in touch with Eddie.

[00:32:28] **Creighton Waters:** And was information related that he was actually offering the staff money to try to use their phone?

[00:32:34] **Ryan Kelly:** Yes. One of the nurses in their notes made note of Mr. Murdaugh trying to offer money to use their phone.

[00:32:43] **Creighton Waters:** Did the family of Mr. Murdaugh relate a specific name and a number to law enforcement as they discovered that Alex was attempting to contact this person?

[00:32:53] **Ryan Kelly:** A specific name and number were provided to us: Curtis Edward Smith. We were able to take the telephone number and trace that back to Mr. Smith.



EPISODE 88: Alex Murdaugh's Pawn: Eddie Smith Is Out of Jail But Still Caught in the Middle

[00:33:05] **Liz Farrell:** The very next day on September 7th, 2021, Judge Carmen Mullen signed the search warrant that ultimately resulted in Eddie Smith's arrest. Eddie's attorneys filed a motion recently for a copy of this warrant because they wanna see how it came to be that the state felt like it had enough evidence to search Eddie's home at that point. And oh yeah — that Judge Carmen Mullen, the one who had recused herself from the boat crash case in 2019, and then behind the scenes just a few weeks after publicly declaring that she had a longstanding relationship with the Murdaugh family and therefore it would be improper for her to reside over the boat crash case, seemed to have no problem signing off on a highly suspicious and secret settlement, overlooking red flag after red flag that gave Alex easy access to stealing millions from the Satterfield family.

[00:33:56] Now, this is interesting because one of the biggest criticisms against SLED during the murder trial was that law enforcement hadn't searched Alameda, Alex's parents' home that was a major part of his alibi until several months after the double homicide. We immediately knew why that was. Like we said before, they would've needed a search warrant to search that home and what judge in the 14th Circuit was going to sign that warrant, which allowed investigators to go into the home of Randolph Murdaugh, the longtime solicitor of the 14th Circuit? No one. But searching the house of Eddie Smith? It's — sure. Where do I sign? SLED allegedly found drugs at Eddie's house, as well as a pharmacological book identifying various pills along with some sort of ledger. To be clear, Eddie denies being a drug dealer. So Randy told SLED to look into this Eddie Smith guy. Then, SLED got a warrant for Eddie Smith's home the very next day. And then, law enforcement searched Eddie's home and found drugs, according to the police reports. Behind the scenes at that very same time, Team Murdaugh was trying to convince the media to write that SLED had identified a suspect. They were also telling us that the discovery of Alex's knife at the scene was not true. It was just a rumor. And at the time, they still wanted us to believe that whoever had shot Alex on the side of the road was the real killer. Then, a few days passed with no arrests in the case. Suddenly, on September 13th, Alex's attorney Dick Harpootlian called SLED and said his client wanted to talk. Here is Dick telling SLED how this was gonna go down.



EPISODE 88: Alex Murdaugh's Pawn: Eddie Smith Is Out of Jail But Still Caught in the Middle

[00:35:38] **Dick Harpootlian:** Okay. So let me say for the record that attorneys Jim Griffin and Dick Harpootlian are here. We've spent the last hour talking to him. We believe that he is of sound mind and body and that he understands and that he's no way diminished acting. He's perfectly confident to answer these questions. Now, we're gonna, we're willing to, and we've advised we're gonna talk about the shooting incident a week ago Saturday, where he was shot in the head and how that happened and why it was going. We don't want to talk about what happened in Moselle and we don't want to talk about anything involving finances at the law firm. Is that okay?

[00:36:24] **Police:** Yes.

[00:36:25] **Dick Harpootlian:** Okay. So Alex, let's talk about last Saturday morning, and let me go through this briefly. Who did you meet with and talked to last Saturday morning?

[00:36:38] **Alex Murdaugh:** I met with Jim Griffin.

[00:36:40] **Dick Harpootlian:** And then what?

[00:36:43] **Alex Murdaugh:** I drove to Hampton and I met with Chris Wilson at my mom's house.

[00:36:50] **Dick Harpootlian:** Okay. And you and Chris were talking about what?

[00:36:53] **Alex Murdaugh:** About everything I had done.

[00:36:57] **Dick Harpootlian:** Okay. Everything you had done concerning finances?

[00:37:00] **Alex Murdaugh:** Finances, pills, life.



EPISODE 88: Alex Murdaugh's Pawn: Eddie Smith Is Out of Jail But Still Caught in the Middle

[00:37:03] **Dick Harpootlian:** Okay. Now, were you taking — well, first of all, let me back up what you're saying. Have you had a long-standing OxyContin or opioid addiction issue?

[00:37:14] **Alex Murdaugh:** Yes, sir.

[00:37:15] **Dick Harpootlian:** How many years?

[00:37:17] **Alex Murdaugh:** The best I can remember around 20 years, 18 to 20 years.

[00:37:24] **Dick Harpootlian:** Okay. Now, on this particular day on this Saturday, were you taking the OxyContin or taking any opioids?

[00:37:34] **Alex Murdaugh:** I had taken some but, you know, I was taking — I'd given it off that I had someone else and I was I'd taken some at like 4:00 AM, so I was having some withdrawals.

[00:37:50] **Dick Harpootlian:** Okay. And the previous day, the news had come out about your embezzling or taking client money or law firm money. Is that correct?

[00:37:58] **Alex Murdaugh:** That's correct.

[00:37:59] **Dick Harpootlian:** And how would you describe your state of mind at that time?

[00:38:02] **Alex Murdaugh:** I was in a very bad place.

[00:38:04] **Dick Harpootlian:** What does that mean?

[00:38:05] **Alex Murdaugh:** I thought it would be better for me not to be here anymore.



EPISODE 88: Alex Murdaugh's Pawn: Eddie Smith Is Out of Jail But Still Caught in the Middle

[00:38:08] **Dick Harpootlian:** What do you mean by not be here anymore?

[00:38:10] **Alex Murdaugh:** I thought that it would make it easier on my family for me to be dead.

[00:38:17] **Dick Harpootlian:** And easier — was some financial gain to your family if you were dead?

[00:38:22] **Alex Murdaugh:** I have a fair amount of life insurance debt.

[00:38:25] **Dick Harpootlian:** Do you remember how much?

[00:38:26] **Alex Murdaugh:** Off the top of my head, but like \$10 million, \$12 million.

[00:38:33] **Dick Harpootlian:** Okay. And so you decided to end your life.

[00:38:37] **Alex Murdaugh:** That's correct.

[00:38:38] **Dick Harpootlian:** And tell these SLED agents how you went about arranging that.

[00:38:43] **Alex Murdaugh:** I called Curtis Eddie Smith on the telephone.

[00:38:46] **Dick Harpootlian:** Okay. Now, let's stop for a second. Who is Curtis Eddie Smith?

[00:38:48] **Alex Murdaugh:** Curtis Eddie Smith is the primary person who I purchased pills from for years.

[00:38:57] **Mandy Matney:** Okay. So a lot of insanity went on during the trial that we didn't have time to unpack, and this is a perfect example.



EPISODE 88: Alex Murdaugh's Pawn: Eddie Smith Is Out of Jail But Still Caught in the Middle

[00:39:06] **Liz Farrell:** Can you guys believe that? The audacity of Dick to call SLED and tell them how his very desperate client, who for all practical purposes at that time was also a double murder suspect was going to run the interview and seemingly fake confess to another crime altogether — a bananas murder for hire plot. Oh. And something else: Mark Tinsley, whose case initiated the Murdaugh receivership, testified that he has found no proof that Alex even had an insurance policy. And from what our sources have told us, no one has. We have yet to see this alleged \$8 million or \$10 million or \$12 million policy, depending on what day Team Murdaugh talks about it, even though we have called for proof of it several times. We have to ask again. Did law enforcement just take Alex's word for it? If so, that is insane. Actually, all of this is insane, especially this fact: Eddie Smith was arrested before Alex Murdaugh, who had just confessed to SLED about committing a crime. And unlike his buddy Alex, he didn't get the opportunity to turn himself in. Sorry. I meant, unlike Alex, he didn't get an opportunity to turn himself in and then, in defiance of his agreement with SLED, drive to his mother's house instead of his lawyer's office as Alex did.

[00:40:32] The day after that interview, after Alex seemingly fake confessed to a second seemingly fake crime, Eddie was arrested and charged with assisted suicide, assault, and battery of a high and aggravated nature, pointing and presenting a firearm, insurance fraud, and conspiracy to commit insurance fraud. Eddie faces more charges in this incident than Alex Murdaugh does. And again, we still haven't seen any proof of that life insurance existing. There still isn't any solid evidence of Alex actually having a gunshot wound.

[00:41:09] We'll be right back.

[00:41:18] **Mandy Matney:** Now, Eddie claims that Alex fell during the debacle. Could Alex could possibly cut himself in the fall and that's where the wound was from? Or could he have cut himself with the knife that was found? Or maybe the bullet could have ricocheted and grazed him, and he was extremely lucky and literally dodged a bullet to the head. All of this sounds crazy, but we have to ask these questions when talking about a murderer who killed his family to avoid his own ruin. Oh, and I recently noticed this: Eddie



EPISODE 88: Alex Murdaugh's Pawn: Eddie Smith Is Out of Jail But Still Caught in the Middle

Smith was also charged with pointing and presenting a firearm, which is funny when you think about it. Remember in court, Dick Harpootlian pretty much pointed and presented a firearm at the prosecution table in front of millions of viewers while he joked saying, "Tempting." And he wasn't charged with anything. Yet the only proof of Eddie pointing and presenting a firearm was Alex's word — Alex the liar, Alex, the quote, serial liar and fraudster in the words of Judge Gergel who said that Alex was manifestly not a credible witness. I know. I know that South Carolina law said that theatrics does not apply. And I'm not saying that Dick Harpootlian should be charged. I'm saying that the law shouldn't work this way — bending in the favor of those who are like Dick Harpootlian and against the powerless like Eddie Smith.

[00:42:55] And again, Eddie is not perfect, but I think it's very fair to say that a lot of the charges against him should be questioned and possibly dropped, considering that they rely heavily on the word of a now-convicted killer and proven habitual liar. And looking at Eddie's charges, it appears like the AG's office was applying pressure on Eddie to talk. They indicted him on four counts of money laundering, three counts of forgery, trafficking meth, one count of unlawful possession of a controlled substance, and possession of marijuana. These charges were filed just weeks before Alex was charged with murder, by the way. Smith is accused of cashing at least \$2.4 million in checks — 437 checks over the course of eight years, all for Alex Murdaugh. But it appears like he didn't get that money. He just acted like a middleman of sorts, passing the cash onto Alex so he could do God knows what with it. Perhaps Eddie was a fall guy from the very beginning. And remember last fall, Dick and Jim tried really hard to get on the record that Eddie was possibly the real killer of Maggie and Paul. Remember all of those headlines? Remember the whole thing about Eddie failing a polygraph and Dick and Jim trying to convince the court that a polygraph is a lie detector test rather than a measure of whether someone is showing signs of deception.

[00:44:35] And while Eddie's defense attorneys are working pro bono, Russell, Cory, and Alex all managed to hire three of the most prestigious defense attorneys in South Carolina. I point this out because it is important as we talk about the two systems of justice here. Remember last summer, Eddie's bond



EPISODE 88: Alex Murdaugh's Pawn: Eddie Smith Is Out of Jail But Still Caught in the Middle

was revoked partially because he had violated the terms of his ankle monitor dozens of times. I just hope that the state is watching Russell Laffitte's ankle monitors as closely as they were watching Eddies. Oh, and let's not forget. Cory Fleming doesn't even have an ankle monitor, even though he's been indicted on more than 20 charges, has been accused of abusing his position of power, has the means and motive of escaping the country, and been accused by the AG's office of not cooperating with law enforcement. In fact, out of Alex's alleged co-conspirators who have been charged, Eddie appears to be the only one who is actually cooperating with the AG's office. During Eddie's bond reconsideration hearing, prosecutor John Meadors was sure to point this out, and I'm gonna have David read this clip that John Meadors said because the audio from the courtroom was very hard to hear.

[00:45:58] **David Moses:** Before the trial, during the trial, I met with him in anticipation of his potential testimony. In the case against Richard Alexander Murdaugh, Judge, he cooperated with both Mr. Zelenka and myself in numerous interviews for numerous hours. No deal has been reached with Mr. Smith. I asked him for his cooperation through his attorneys. Mr. Smith agreed to do that. He was prepared to do that I believe, and if he was called upon, the decision was made not to, but he fully cooperated with us throughout this process and was willing to testify if called upon. Based upon my years of experience, I think he will testify truthfully. I did tell them — again, I didn't promise anything except that we would take his cooperation into consideration and bring that forward to the court.

[00:46:44] **Mandy Matney:** So this is interesting that Eddie Smith is now cooperating. This should be said because there appears to be a big misunderstanding here. According to a source close to the investigation, Eddie told law enforcement where the gun from the roadside incident was located, and SLED recovered that gun, which was Alex Murdaugh's gun and apparently only had one discharged bullet, and that matches Eddie's story that he wrestled Alex for the gun, Alex fell, and the gun went off.

[00:47:16] Considering Eddie's alleged role in cashing checks for Alex, Eddie could possibly be a huge asset for the Attorney General's Office if they actually



EPISODE 88: Alex Murdaugh's Pawn: Eddie Smith Is Out of Jail But Still Caught in the Middle

want to get to the bottom of this. Remember we still don't know where the millions went. We still don't know the extent of whatever scheme Alex was involved in and how many people helped him. If Eddie cooperates and the AG's office asks the right questions, it's possible that they could get a lot of answers. Eddie has no reason to protect Alex at this point. Every pound that he put on in jail should be a reminder to him that Alex is not worth lying for. He's not worth keeping secrets for, and yet again it seems like we're seeing the two systems of justice at play. Cory Fleming, who had the luxury of paying for a high-powered attorney, is out on bond and free as a bird. Russell Laffitte, who authorities noted on several occasions that he didn't cooperate, is currently on house arrest waiting for his federal sentence. And we are waiting for that federal sentence, too. The question is: will we see authorities apply pressure on Alex's privileged buddies like they did on Eddie? And if not, where is the justice in that?

[00:48:40] Judge Newman ultimately reinstated Eddie's bond and he was released last week. Eddie is scheduled to appear again in court for a hearing on April 21st. We're gonna keep a close eye on Eddie Smith because he presents such a fascinating conundrum for the Attorney General's Office. Eddie's original charges stemmed from a time when — let's face it — law enforcement was treating Alex Murdaugh and his defense team differently when Alex was viewed by many as an addict falling from grace whose family was just murdered, when Alex's word actually meant something — at least to those who were still unwilling to cross him. The Attorney General's Office cannot say in one case that Alex is a liar and a murderer, and then say that his testimony in another case should be considered as evidence. As we saw, that argument did not fly for Russell Laffitte in his second attempt at getting a new trial. Everyone makes mistakes, but if we want the justice system to be fixed, we need mistakes like Eddie's insurance fraud charge, when there is seemingly no proof of insurance fraud whatsoever, to be corrected. We will keep screaming this from the rooftops.

[00:50:02] We need one justice system to be applied equally. That means for innocent victims like Stephen and for defendants like Eddie, who could not afford to pay the right people to stay out of trouble, who meant so little to



EPISODE 88: Alex Murdaugh's Pawn: Eddie Smith Is Out of Jail But Still Caught in the Middle

Alex Murdaugh that he was expendable. The Alex Murdaugh verdict was a step in the right direction, but the system is far from fixed and we will keep fighting and exposing the truth little by little, case by case. We hope to see big changes in South Carolina and even beyond that wherever crime meets corruption. Stay tuned, stay pesky, and stay in the sunlight.

[00:50:59] **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.

MURDAUGH
MURDERS
PODCAST