



EPISODE 17: The Persecution of Becky Hill and What's Really Going on with Alex Murdaugh's Defense

Mandy Matney 0:00

I don't know how far Dick and Jim will get in their latest efforts to overturn Alex Murdaugh's conviction and get him out of state prison. But it is now very clear that they intend to burn down the state of South Carolina if they have to. The question is why? And how long will the government allowed this to go on? My name is Mandy Matney. This is True Sunlight, a podcast exposing crime and corruption previously known as the Murdaugh Murders Podcast. True Sunlight is a Luna Shark Production written with journalist Liz Farrell.

Hello, everyone, we are back on the Murdaugh roller coaster again this week, so buckle up. Speaking of rollercoasters, I have been recording the audio version of my book *Blood on their Hands: Murder, Corruption, and the fall of the Murdaugh Dynasty*. It has been emotional saying out loud the parts of this story I kept so tight for so long. The book comes out November 14. And shamelessly I want to ask you, our loyal listeners who have stuck by us for more than 100 episodes to preorder my book at the link in the description. This book is by far the scariest thing I have ever done in my life. It is not just a book about the Murdaughs, it's a memoir about my life and my journey to become the journalist I am today. It is full of painful and emotional memories that I have shared with just a few people and it is wildly different from the podcast, but in a good way. And I have to say my co-author, Carolyn Murnick, is the most amazing human being. Tonight Luna Shark Soak Up the Sun Premium Members will get access to a very special pre-recorded happy hour with Carolyn, David, and I. We recorded it ahead of time because we had to attend a federal hearing in Charleston today, which we will talk about later this episode. But the happy hour will answer a lot of questions you all have about the book and Carolyn and I will be joining live to chat with you all so we can answer your questions as we all watch together tonight, September 21 at 7pm. Links will be provided to Luna shark premium soak up the sun members and Pocketful of Sunshine members will receive the link shortly after the broadcast. Oh, and this happy hour will be extra special. We are going to be giving away merch and fun prizes to the peskiest participants aka those who are engaging the most. Don't miss it tonight at 7pm eastern time. It was emotional talking about the book with Carolyn this week, because honestly, this has been an extremely emotional journey for me. And speaking of emotions. This week, I received several unkind messages from listeners saying that they were appalled in the recent Cup of Justice episode. I want to talk about this for a minute because raw emotions are honestly a big part of our success.



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We haven't held back emotions as we've taken you along this journey for more than two years. And I think that that's a big reason why y'all trust us. And also why whenever I meet listeners in person, it feels like we've known each other for years. I won't lie. I laughed a lot in this week's Cup of Justice. Because y'all what happened this week was absurd. What's been happening in the Murdaugh case for the last month has been absurd. We have wanted to dive into other cases, we are trying to use our resources to help solve other crimes and help other victims outside of the Murdaugh realm. But it's like this dragon can't be slayed and every time we think that we're in the clear and we've out run the beast, the monsters suck us back into the underworld. Every time I get sucked back in, I get angrier and more emotional. How many resources are we going to waste on Dick and Jim's shenanigans? Is SLED ever going to make an arrest in Stephen's murder if this keeps going on? If they are forced to investigate every stupid claim made by two ridiculous people? Over the last four and a half years, Liz and I have laughed, cried and screamed about Alex Murdaugh and the systemic South Carolina absurdity surrounding him. The first time I saw Alex Murdaugh in court for Paul Murdaugh's BUI hearing, I watched him the father of the defendant bob around the courtroom like he was the mayor. I saw it. The courtroom was his kingdom, and I watched him work it. While so many others looked the other way and brushed Alex Murdaugh off, Liz and I kept a harsh spotlight on him until finally his kingdom crumbled in 2021. And here we are in 2023, and this man who used to consider this same courthouse his kingdom was brought in by a leash like a dog at the same courthouse where the son he murdered stood accused of killing Mallory Beach in 2019. In the same courthouse where he stole millions of dollars from the Satterfield's also in 2019. It's all so poetic. I had to laugh. And it's even more absurd that the government recognizes Alex Murdaugh is leash level dangerous yet they allowed him to openly canoodle with one of the most powerful lawmakers in our state. I have to say this again. Representative Todd Rutherford, the man who did the impossible and got another murderer out of prison 15 years early, was caught on camera fan girling over Alex Murdaugh, one of the worst criminals in our state's history. I go to sleep at night thinking about these things and how much is going to be required to change the system. At this point. I am doing whatever I can to stay sane. While these good old boys continue to terrorize the state of South Carolina. I am emotional about this because it matters. Because in the last few weeks, I have realized that this could go on for a another four years. I can't abandon the story now. It is too important. So I will be emotional about it. I will laugh, scream, and cry my way through it as we attempt to change the system for the



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better. We have seen for ourselves the amount of narrative shifting the Murdaughs and their team can do in just one month. Between the Fox News propaganda documentary where they attempted to rewrite Murdaugh history, and Dick and Jim's absurd press conference, and the jury tampering accusations, and Dick and Jim Griffin's shaky media statements on his own podcast. It is clear teen Murdaugh has taken us all for a roller coaster in the past month. The scary thing that I see is that some of it is working. I see a lot more doubt about Alex's conviction online. I'm seeing a lot of "what if the cartel murdered Maggie and Paul" theories floating around Twitter. And mainstream media continues to publish pieces that helped spin their narrative. The recent PR push has been one of the smarter moves made by Team Murdaugh, I have to admit. But they forget that we are smart too. And after weeks of intensely studying their moves, I think we know exactly what they are up to. This episode was published Thursday morning, by the way, before Alex Murdaugh's federal plea deal was set to start at 10am. We will cover the federal hearing in a later episode and or on Cup of Justice. We did not wait to publish this episode because we already had so much to talk about in the Murdaugh world and we didn't want whatever nonsense Dick and Jim are trying to pull to change the course of this episode.

Liz Farrell 8:54

Today we're going to talk about Alex Murdaugh's plea deal and how it fits into his claims that Colleton County Clerk of Court Becky Hill tampered with the jury. First though, let's quickly talk about everything that has happened since our last episode. The biggest thing is that we finally got clarity on Cory Fleming's state sentence. It was confusing for just about everyone, even the state Attorney General's office. Overall Cory was given 70 years, that's 50 for the Satterfield case and 20 for the Pinckney case. The math on those 70 years though, quickly becomes 20 because the sentences for each case run concurrently to each other. So that ends up being 10 years for Satterfield and then 10 years for Pinckney. Now, the Satterfield sentence runs concurrent to Cory's federal sentence which was also for his Satterfield crime, so 46 months of a state sentence will be served in federal prison and the balance will be served in state prison. Cory was not charged with the Pinkney crimes in his federal case, so to make up for that Judge Clifton Newman gave Cory 10 years to run consecutive to his federal sentence. The bottom line is that Cory's sentence works out to be about 13 years and 10 months total. It'll most likely end up being much less than that though, and we'll talk about that sometime in the future when it becomes



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more clear what that looks like. Okay, two more updates. Russell Laffitte was supposed to report for prison in Florida today. But on Monday, his attorneys filed yet another extension for that. They are still waiting to hear about his appeal bond, which means that Russell would get to remain free until his appeal gets ruled on which could be years. It's a two part delay. Part one, they want Judge gurgle to continue to let him to stay out of prison until the appeals court rules on his bond, which Judge gurgle did on Wednesday afternoon by allowing him to stay out another week. And part two, they want the appeals court to let him stay out of prison until they rule on his case. Behind the scenes we sometimes get the giggles thinking about how out of all of the conspirators Russell Laffite, the derpiest one of all might end up being the guy who fights this the hardest. You can almost see Russell's claw marks on the streets of Hampton County as he gets dragged into accountability. Lastly, Alex is appealing the court's decision not to allow him to withdraw his confession of judgment in the Satterfield case, because why not? What else does he have to do these days? Oh right, he has those accusations of jury tampering. So even though there are a lot of reasons to think that this is just another typical chapter and Dick and Jim's big book of clown lawyering, this is really serious. If they are wrong about Becky Hill and what they alleged to be jury tampering, they will have needlessly torched the reputation and possibly the career of a woman who truly seems to love her job. They will have also recklessly caused fear in those who loved Maggie and Paul and who want to live without the fear that Alex will eventually get out of what they know he did. If Dick and Jim are wrong, they will have wasted who knows how much more money in taxpayer dollars. And if they are wrong, they did this knowing they could get away with it because there have been minimal repercussions for their antics thus far. But if they are right, it means the justice system in this state is so broken, that it might not be fixable. Putting all that aside, this thing, this force, this machine, this monster, whatever we want to call the efforts behind keeping Alex Murdaugh from feeling the full brunt of consequence, and keeping the Murdaugh name from finally folding in on itself is what has been used to keep people in the 14th circuit silent, compliant and in check for generations. Or rather, the fear that these tactics would be deployed has kept them in check. Anyway, remember what Paul's friend Anthony Cook said to the deputy the night of the boat crash after explicitly identifying the driver of the boat as Paul, "that's Alec Murdaugh's son, good luck." He was barely out of high school at the time, and he already knew the reality of where he lived. When it was happening as he spoke, one law enforcement officer who didn't know the Murdaughs wrote down what Anthony



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said in his report. He was fired a year later. But two other law enforcement officers both of whom knew the Murdaughs heard the same thing and somehow wrote down that no one would say who was driving. One of those men now works for SLED. This is all just to say that to live the easiest life in Murdaugh country people have to find a way to simultaneously steer clear of the Murdaughs while also playing nice with them. And that means having to eternally accept their version of reality without question. It's really a sick thing. It's a virus and that virus is mutating. From what we've gleaned from Becky Hill's book, she has been infected for a long time. It's why she's in this mess in the first place, in our opinion, but we'll get to that. Right now we need to pick a lens meaning the context with which to view all of this. For now our lens is going to be this: credibility, specifically the credibility of the messengers. The messengers here are Dick and Jim. So obviously there is no credibility. That's why their narrative of Becky Hill tampering with the jury needs to be completely dismantled, and each part examined before we can know where this latest twist in this never ending saga might take us. Right now the only thing we have from Dick and Jim are serious allegations, which they've plumped up with a whole bunch of fluff and big headlines, and then doubled down on because of course they did. This should all sound familiar because even though this feels different, it's very much the same tactics we've seen from the start.

EXPOSING CRIME & CORRUPTION

Mandy Matney 15:16

Now, let's do a quick rundown of Dick and Jim's recent history of lies. I'm not going to go far back here. It's not like this is ancient history that reporters have to dig up newspaper archives for. I'm talking about lies in the past two years. Lies that most of the same reporters who were at that press conference were spoon fed time and time again. Reporters are supposed to vet credibility to find the truth and reflect the truth in their story. A person who has been proven to lie after so many times should not be given the same weight in a story as a person who has been proven to be trustworthy. This is a big part of a journalist's job, maybe the most important skill that separates true journalists from the hacks. You know how many times sources told me things that I didn't print or say out loud on the podcast in the last two years because they came from sources who I could not trust? So many times. Journalism can't just be a rumor mill. It is what makes it different from social media. I say all of this because it was frustrating to see the headlines in early September about Dick and Jim's latest moves, as if these men have never once lied to us before. Here's David reading just a few of those headlines.



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DAVID MOSES 16:47

Alex Murdaugh's defense seeks new trial based on claims of jury tampering, NBC.
Alex Murdaugh update: new evidence may spark another trial, Newsweek.
Murdaugh attorneys seeking new trial based on quote, discovered evidence, Live 5 News.

Mandy Matney 17:07

Reading those headlines, you would think there would be a serious chance for a new trial in this case, and this is how misinformation is spread and people like Team Murdaugh benefit. Now these headlines splashed across the internet the week of Labor Day weekend, Labor Day weekend. Who else is old enough to remember what happened on Labor Day weekend of 2021 when the most provable of the lies began? Well, let's start with a big one. When Dick and Jim told the media that some rando assailant shot Alex Murdaugh in the head while he was changing a tire on his way to Charleston. There are so many lies in that sentence alone. It is hard to keep track. As we remember Alex was never changing a tire. He doesn't do that. His car had run flat tires. The road he was on wasn't even on the way to Charleston. So that was another lie. There was no random assailant. There was Alex's cousin, Eddie Smith, who we still have a lot of questions about. Remember when they swore he was shot in the head and he had a skull fracture and a brain bleed to prove it and then Alex showed up in court two weeks later, without even a tiny booboo on his head. I almost forgot the time Jim Griffin late night tweeted me that he would bet me booze that Alex Murdaugh's medical records proved that he was shot in the head. We still do not have proof that he was actually shot. The redacted medical records reflect what busy ER doctors were told what happened to him. We have seen this so many times with Dick and Jim. They make absurd claims and bury half truths in large piles of paperwork that confuse and convince the media of their narrative. I look back on the statements they've made then to the media and I get angry thinking about how irresponsible they were to spread those lies like that when they did. How did they not do basic fact checking about the car he was driving, the road he was on, the wound on his head before they spilled that sad story to the world about how this man, his wife and son were just murdered, was targeted himself in a roadside shooting. Labor Day weekend was also when Team Murdaugh suddenly told us about Alex Murdaugh's multimillion dollar drug habit. Another lie served hot by the defense that the press just ate up and spit out to the masses. Well, even if it wasn't a flat out



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lie, it was most certainly exaggerated. The amount of pills that they claimed he consumed had been said by experts to be impossible for any addict to endure without dying. And before we move on, I just want to point out a few more lies that this same defense has served up to the media in the last few years. Like the rock solid alibi that was shattered by just a dog video. Like the super short shooters they claimed were at Moselle that night. Like the picture perfect relationship between Maggie and Alex. All lies. Dick Harpootlian stood before the court and claimed that Alex Murdaugh was impecunious when he knew that Alex was sitting on million dollar assets, I could go on. But I have to say this, again, we cannot take these people seriously. It is irresponsible to give them equal weight to the prosecution whose claims have been proven accurate, that isn't reporting the truth that is reporting the spin.

Liz Farrell 21:00

Now let's talk about their objectives. What are Dick and Jim trying to do here? Besides burn down everyone's houses to save a lying and thieving murderer, we believe there are a few other things going on. The first is that Alex likely wants to either get his conviction fully overturned, so he can say to his family, "see, I didn't kill them," or failing that he might want to create enough doubt about his conviction in the headlines so he can say to his family, "see, I didn't kill them. And also, I'm a victim in this." We cannot overstate this. Alec Murdaugh might be a national story, but his world is the one his family created for him for generations. And that world is the one that matters most to him, even behind bars, he needs his family on his side so he can keep on being a part of that world. Their belief in Him is all the truth he needs about what he did. So if it works for him to pretend to be a victim, and that there's more to the story, and that he's doing some noble thing by not sharing details with law enforcement to protect them, then that's what he's going to do. Remember how after Paul's murder, Alec was completely focused on clearing Paul's name in the boat crash? That's how big of a stain the accusation was on the family. Paul's crash was a burden that Alex carried around with him not only because of the existential threat it caused for his crimes, but because of what it said about Paul and what is said about the name Murdaugh. It goes back to what we said earlier about the Murdaugh family needing their version of reality to be the accepted version of the truth. So there's that. This whole thing could simply be about Alex trying to save his name in the family. But we think there's more to it. One of the biggest lessons these past few years have taught Alex Murdaugh is that his power is no longer a switch he can turn



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on. Dick and Jim are having that same problem, at least in state court, and in the court of public opinion. Federal Court seems to be open to their nonsense still, though, now that we know Dick has connections to Judge Richard Gergel. It sort of all starts to make sense. That said just about every direction Dick and Jim have chosen to run in the Alex Murdaugh maze has resulted in a dead end thus far. So maybe all of this is just them trying to prove to themselves and other people that they can David Copperfield their way out of this, that they still got it, that they are the masters of this game and will not be defeated. Maybe that's how to explain this latest move of theirs. Maybe Alex's sociopathy is contagious and the drive to win is what's behind it all. Or maybe Alec is just bored. Maybe that's why they can't just cut their losses and move on with life. Maybe that's why they have to toy with the idea of jury tampering. Eric Bland, our co-host on Cup of Justice, pointed out in our latest episode that Alex look like he was on a field trip last week in Beaufort County Court. This stuff is fun for him. So maybe the more filings the more exciting his life gets. He's just sitting in his cell eating bologna sandwiches, playing solitaire, and thinking of new ways to be the legal joker of South Carolina while everyone else around him has to suffer through this new hobby of his. Of course, we'd love to know who's paying for this persistent representation. But that's a task for another day. Ultimately, we think the reason for his latest move is this. Dick and Jim are fixated on getting Alec transferred from state prison to federal prison. Again, Alec Murdaugh and his friends clearly don't hold as much power as they used to hold in the state justice system but the federal system seems more promising for them. Not only is it better living conditions for Alex, it removes the pesky Attorney General's office and SLED from the equation. Alex and his friends might have more control over the situation were he to be transferred to federal prison. So that's the goal. Now they want the conviction overturned on appeal so that there are no back to back life sentences in state prison standing in their way. Their claim of jury tampering is like a protein shot in their appellate smoothie. Originally, they were appealing on the grounds that they believe Judge Newman erred in allowing testimony about Alex's financial crimes. That is a legitimate claim to make because it's a matter of opinion. Right? jury tampering removes opinion though, because it's that horrifying of an accusation. It's the difference between saying, "I don't like that restaurant. So let's not go there" versus saying "that restaurant has a rat problem." Now, here's what we think is on Dick and Jim's vision board besides fan letters from our trolls and photos of California Attorneys, there is a big portrait of Clifton Newman. They want Judge Newman off the case. And we think that all of this is to get to that end point. They need to get



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him off the case and get another judge to postpone the state trial on his financial crimes before the federal government sentences him for his financial crimes. That way the runway will be cleared for the possibility of his murder conviction being overturned all together and or in order for a new trial. And then Alex can pack up his beef jerky and head to federal prison.

Mandy Matney 26:10

Let's look at what they have done so far to get there. First, on August 24, a notice was filed in federal court that there would be a hearing on Alex Murdaugh's change of plea, which like we said is scheduled for today. We need to talk about that real quick. At the end of May this year, when it was announced that Alec would be charged with 22 Federal counts related to his financial crimes, Dick and Jim indicated that Alex would be pleading guilty and cooperating with federal investigators. But no surprise to anyone, that is not what happened. Instead, he did a big ol' about face and pleaded not guilty. Now we think he did this to buy some time for Dick and Jim to drive quote, "the dirt roads of Colleton county" as they snobbishly referred to them to rustle up some jurors for their long game. After this change of plea hearing date was announced for Alex's renewed decision to plead guilty, there was then the sudden early release of the Fox Nation docuseries that portrayed Alex in a softer lens and put it out there that Buster and ostensibly the Murdaugh family believe A: Alex knows more than he's saying about what happened the night of the murders and B: that the jury was biased from the beginning and may even have been compelled to reach the conclusion that they did. The headlines that followed were variations of Buster thinks his father's innocent and that the real killer is still out there. The discussion that followed was basically "oh, maybe it was the cartel and maybe Alex is protecting his family." Uh, no. But we will discuss that theory more on a future Cup of Justice episode. Immediately after the docuseries was released, there was Dick and Jim's jury tampering filing in their lame-o press conference. We didn't broadcast their press conference live at the time because A: we did not want to give them that platform to spread what based on past exploits would be twisted information and half truths. And B: we wanted to be able to give context to what they said. So let's go back to this timeline real quick, because it's going to be one of the most important aspects of this, we think. And it is critical that people understand what they are hearing. Remember, the game is to get Judge Newman removed. They need to pry open the door just enough to get there. And Becky Hill is their crowbar. Dick and Jim want one fact to make their two opposing points. The first is that Becky Hill's



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purported interference with the jury was known to Judge Newman at the time that Juror 785, aka the egg juror slash monkey farm lady was dismissed. But he did nothing to further investigate that interference. The second is that Dick and Jim were shocked and caught off guard by the revelation of Becky's alleged interference, and that they didn't find out about it until after the trial. And that is why they didn't call for an investigation until now. But the problem with that if Judge Newman knew that there was an interference at the time, then so did Dick and Jim because the evidence they are offering of Judge Newman's knowing about this alleged interference is an in-camera hearing held in his chambers, which both Dick and Jim attended. The evidence they have is a transcript of that hearing that shows that the judge was unhappy to learn that the clerk of court had spoken to juror 785 about an alleged Facebook post when she should have brought it to his attention instead. Here is David reading from the transcript. Judge Newman is "The Court."

DAVID MOSES 30:05

The Court: Oh, boy. I'm not too pleased about the clerk interrogating a juror as opposed to coming to me and bringing it to me.

Mr. Griffin: I was surprised to hear that.

The Court: Yeah.

Liz Farrell 30:22

So there you go. It's another example of Dick and Jim making an outlandish statement. The judge knew and then getting played by their own outlandish statement because they knew too. Right after their lame-o press conference, Jim Griffin went on the podcast, The Untold Story with Martha McCallum, to talk about their so called bombshell filing. Martha is the reporter who interviewed Buster for the docuseries. Here's how that podcast went. Jim starts by talking about juror 785. And what happened when she was dismissed on March 2nd.

DAVID MOSES 30:54

She was so upset about it. She went to see a lawyer and the lawyer said, "write everything down." And so what this juror has is a bevy of notes of her recollection of what she wrote.

Liz Farrell 31:04



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Juror 785's attorney is Joe McColloch. Joe is also Connor Cook's attorney and Connor Cook is the young man who Paul and allegedly the Murdaugh family were pinning the blame on for the boat crash. Joe is also a very good friend and regular lunch buddy of Dick's, according to several sources, and he sat in the murder trial every day for six weeks. Why? Well, great question. During the trial, Joe also did something else. He paid for a catered party with an open bar to celebrate Becky Hill's birthday. It was held in the media center the night before the verdict was read. We don't know when Juror 785 hired Joe, was it when the trial was still happening? Or was it after. And that can end up being a sticking point. After Jim tells Martha that the lawyer told the jury to write everything down. Martha says "Why weren't you made aware of this was going on? And why wasn't Judge Newman made aware that this was going on, because that would have stopped all of this in its tracks during the trial." Here's David as a Jim again, and we're going to leave in the places where Jim sort of stuttered.

DAVID MOSES 32:08

Yeah, so yeah, so the that's a really good question. I can't tell you that, you know, Miss Hill didn't come forward with it, that there is in the transcript of one of our hearings. And we attached that in our in our petition to the Court of Appeals, there's a transcript where this juror relayed to Judge Newman and me and Creighton Waters in in-camera, hearing that Miss Hill had told her about this Facebook post and Judge Newman questioned her about, you know, communication with Miss Hill. Now, interestingly, Miss Hill was not in the courthouse that day, and I'm not sure why. But after, after the juror leaves, Judge Newman says words to the effect of "oh, boy, I'm not pleased with the clerk of court questioning jurors about this. She should have brought it all to me." And I said, "Yeah, I'm surprised too, Judge." And so I, that is on the record. All right, that is on the record. And so we knew that, but you know, the juror that um, I don't think the juror was keeping it from us. I don't you know, I don't think the juror knew any better, frankly, because here's the clerk of court, the clerk of courts in there. And her job is to manage the jury, you know, logistically, and, and so, you know, I don't think that she knew immediately, I don't know, I wish we had known. I wish we had known and there would have been a mistrial right then and there. I can assure you, if the information that we now know had come out during the trial, the trial never would have been completed, and it shouldn't have been.

Liz Farrell 33:53



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So got this because Judge Newman said that "oh, boy thing" Dick and Jim believe that makes him a witness to Becky Hill's alleged improprieties, here's Dick at that lame-o press conference. Now, mind you, he's being coy. He can't give the appearance that this is all to remove Judge Newman. Instead, he asked to act like Judge Newman's removal is simply any inevitable conclusion that any reasonable person would draw. A reporter pointed out to Dick that according to their filing, Judge Newman was, quote, at least aware of some of the allegations. And Dick is like, well, that's a good point, as if this reporter weren't just citing Dick's own words back at them. Here he is.

Dick Harpootlian 34:30

Well, and that's a good point. There's no suggestion that that the judge did anything untoward. But what that does do if it comes back, he may end up being a witness. So I mean, it's until the court of appeals acts, that issue does not have to be dealt with.

Liz Farrell 34:47

I just want to take a second to give an RIP to Dick's inflated sense of self. This man has spent his entire life believing he is the most clever boy in clever land. And for his entire life, his colleagues and the legal profession and the press has been like "that Dick, he is so clever. Put another gold star on his jacket." And here we are all of us like "Oh no you don't, we see you, sir" and we're throwing his gold star sticker book on the ground. So Dick and Jim have a few tricks in their magician's chest here. Turn Judge Newman into a witness and get him off the case was trick one. Trick two is postpone Alex's state financial trial until after Judge Newman retires January 1, so we can get another judge. Here's how that went during their status conference in Beaufort County last week. The audio isn't great, but we want you to hear the exchange for yourselves.

Dick Harpootlian 35:39

Your Honor, there are a number of different objections we have trying any stage this year. We previously got the impression from your honor at the last status conference that you would not be (unintelligible) this case. (unintelligible)

Judge Clifton Newman 35:57

(unintelligible) question again?



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Dick Harpootlian 36:01

That was my impression based on (unintelligible). Maybe I misread you, I've done that from time to time.

Liz Farrell 36:08

So trick two didn't go as planned. Judge Newman was like "Excuse you? January 1." Trick three is delay delay anyway, but that didn't work either. Dick gave Judge Newman a litany of reasons why neither he nor Jim were available for Alex to be tried until next fall. They're both very important lawyers with very important trials and very important pre-trial hearings coming up. And then it's Thanksgiving and then it's Christmas. And then Dick has legislative immunity again until the summer. Judge Newman was like, "oh boy, November 27, it is." Trick four is likely going to be to get Judge Newman disqualified as a judge before Alex's state trial. So get ready for that one.

Mandy Matney 36:52

In the meantime, there's Becky. So, Becky Hill is the Clerk of Court of Colleton county and she made quite the impression on a lot of people during the trial. In some ways, she played the part of the hostess of the entire county. She seemed to really enjoy showing the world that her home is a friendly home. Here is David reading a paragraph from the biography in her book, which I think captures Becky so well.

DAVID MOSES 37:23

Becky was born in the southern town of Walterboro, South Carolina and grew up swimming in the Edisto river, shrimping with her dad in the Lowcountry waters and camping with her friends at Rocks Pond and Santee. She grew up in Edgewood Baptist Church and played the piano and organ there and sang in the choir. She also married her husband Tommy 35 years ago in that same church in Walterboro.

Mandy Matney 37:49

Becky was a longtime court reporter assigned to Judge Perry Buckner. Judge Buckner was the other judge besides Carmen Mullen, who recused himself from the boat crashed case in 2019 because of his personal relationship with the Murdaugh family. Becky was elected to the clerk position and 2020 it is an open secret in the 14th circuit that the Murdaughs helped put her into office. We asked reporter Beth Braden to take a look at Becky's campaign filings. And here's just a few of the familiar



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names that she found on the donor list. Judge Carmen Mullen's husband's law firm, PMPED attorney Graham Holmes, PMPED partner Danny Henderson, who by the way is the man who was sitting in the backseat of the car when Alex first talk to SLED on the night of the murders and is also the man with the connections to the US Attorney's Office in Charleston. Another name, Judge Buckner's wife, Janet, there's also PMPED attorney William Barnes, there's Alex two besties, Cory Fleming and Chris Wilson, and there is PMPED attorney, Ronnie Crosby, who testified during the trial and who we still have a lot of questions about. Now, there are several things that struck me about Becky when I read her book, and yes, I guess we should address that part. She wrote a book about the trial, and that book came out in July. That is lightning speed in the book world, even with a co-author. It's the release of this book that Dick and Jim claim that caused jurors to come forward and by come forward, they mean the egg juror and one other juror who likes to smoke, apparently. No other jurors signed an affidavit attesting to their allegations. Well, we were impressed by Becky's industrious spirit in her writing speed, I really didn't know what to think about the book before I read it. Sure, it was an unusual thing for a clerk of court to do. But isn't everything about this trial unusual in a case where I can't even count the possible ethics violations, like when Dick Harpootlian pointed and presented a gun in court and joked about shooting the prosecution. It's safe to say the lines between abnormal and unethical can be very blurry. Before the book was published, The State newspaper wrote a story about all of the books that were being written about the Murdaugh case and included Becky's among them as an equal. At no point did the reporter the paper or the paper's editorial board seem to have a problem with the ethics of the clerk of court writing this book. No major news organization called her book into question. No attorney in the matter calls it into question. To be honest, there really wasn't much buzz about it at all. I swear I'm not saying this to be insulting. Considering the fact that she is a clerk of court and not a writer, we weren't expecting an In Cold Blood level book here. And I say that there wasn't much buzz because it's weird to me that Dick and Jim claim that these two jurors suddenly came forward after Becky's book came out. As it turns out, Becky did ask the state ethics commission to weigh in on the ethics of writing a book as clerk of court about major trials in the state. In the opinion she got seem to say "fine by us." Of course, Dick and Jim, who say Becky was motivated by fame and money, are insinuating that she was dishonest with the ethics commission. And regarding fame and money, this book was self published. And what we have here is a bit of the Streisand effect going on, because Dick and Jim have brought far more publicity for Becky's book than she



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ever could have. And y'all we haven't no idea how much money Dick and Jim have made off of this Murdaugh murder mess, but I promise you it is more than what Becky has made from her book.

Liz Farrell 42:15

So here are our impressions. First, Becky admitted that she had long admired the Murdaugh family. She clearly had a really good relationship with Alec and his father before the murders. Her grandfather and big Buster Murdaugh had known each other and had teamed up for some moonshining back in the day, apparently. Her family got arrested around the same time that Buster was indicted federally, but that was the end of it. Her family was never indicted and Buster was found not guilty for his alleged moonshine production. In the book if there was a benefit of doubt to give to Alex she gave it to him. If there was a more compassionate way to look at his family, she offered that instead of criticism. According to Jim Griffin in a podcast, Becky even made sure that Alex ate as well as the court stuff was eating during the trial. The only negative insight she gave wasn't actually insight at all. It was all already known. His family had gotten into trouble for their behavior in the courtroom. But Becky was clear that Alex's brother John Marvin had apologized for it and had attributed their behavior to his lack of familiarity in the courtroom. That's his shtick by the way, that he is the black sheep of the family for not having studied law. Though Becky noted that Alex's sister was not happy with the court staff and that before the trial, Lynn had asked for a private room for the family and security escorts to and from the courtroom, Becky empathize with Lynn.

DAVID MOSES 43:39

Several times I had to meet with Lynn, John Marvin and other members of the Murdaugh family. Each time I met with them there was understanding. I would be the same way too if this had been my brother on trial for double murder.

Liz Farrell 43:52

Becky also noted Lynn's reaction to Judge Newman sentencing of Alex but again, she showed Lynn great compassion.

DAVID MOSES 43:59

She even rolled her eyes when Judge Newman announced that Alex's life sentences would run consecutively. I didn't see any sympathy or concern or compassion for her



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brother, but I learned later that she and her husband are both compassionate people who give to their friends that are very involved in their community. However, in those moments, with her brother's life on the line, perhaps she was overcome with stress and grief.

Liz Farrell 44:26

Until the trial, Becky Hill did not believe that Alec Murdaugh had killed his wife and son after she saw the evidence after she visited Moselle, she said she saw his guilt. Speaking of Moselle in their filing, Dick and Jim misstated Becky's words in the book to make it look like she was seeing herself as the 13th Juror when that is far from the case, at least from what we can tell. Here's Dick at the press conference after The State's reporter pointed out that Becky had self published her book and there was no book deal as Dick had made it out to be.

Dick Harpootlian 44:57

Well, she's trying to make a lot of money. That's the point. I mean, she did. She's trying to make money off of it. She's selling the book. I mean, the question is, was it a successful scheme? I don't know. I mean, it wasn't if you've read it. I'm not gonna give a book review here, but I don't know if you buy the book. I mean, it's not well written. The story they take she tells not accurate in our opinion, at least the facts as we saw them.

Liz Farrell 45:28

The reporter then asked Dick what he thought of the passage about Moselle that was mentioned in his filing.

Dick Harpootlian 45:34

Well, you know, the problem I have with what she says in there is after going to Mizel, Moselle, we, if you notice she used the plural we felt such and such and such and such, is that the jurors and her? I mean, I think that's great cross examination for her when she testifies in this matter, before the trial judge if the Court of Appeals sends it back.

Liz Farrell 45:55

We - here's how Becky used we in the book when it came to Moselle.



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DAVID MOSES 46:00

While the jurors viewed the Moselle property, we all could hear and see that Alex's story was impossible.

Liz Farrell 46:08

We as in Becky, the journalists and the courtroom staff.

DAVID MOSES 46:12

in the moments riding back in our vehicle, and with the jurors and decision makers in other vehicles, we were just regular people, and our thoughts spilled out.

Liz Farrell 46:22

We, as in the jurors were not there. Another impression we had of Becky's book was how her job, her chosen career, was not just something she took pride in, it was an identity for her. She seems to take her job seriously. There is passage after passage after passage in this book that shows the planning she put into making all the trains run on time for this trial. There is example after example of her love for being a clerk of court. Dick and Jim want to paint Becky as being some random untrained lady who wandered in off the street. They keep mentioning that the state of South Carolina has no certification requirement for clerks of court or required continued education hours. But if you look at Becky's career in the two years that she was clerk of court prior to the trial, she was clearly deeply involved in the State Association of Clerks of Court and she made excellent use of her resources. When she didn't know the answer to something she found a person who did according to her book. In fact, she enlisted the help of other clerks of court from around the state who traveled to Colleton and to lend assistance during those six weeks. One of the people advising her was the president of the State Association of Clerks of Court. Everything from the parking to the food trucks to the portable toilets to the seating system to the AV system required foresight, a required looking around corners at the worst possible scenario and then Becky plan for those scenarios from what we can tell from the book. Frankly, Becky Hill seems to be a person who looks around corners, someone who considers what lies on the other side of an action or an inaction. That's not exactly what we would call a reckless person who plays fast and loose with the rules.

Mandy Matney 48:06



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Another big takeaway we had from the book is how small Becky's world was before this trial. In fact, the first time she was on an airplane was when she accompany jurors to the Today Show after the trial. She said she was excited to get pretzels and a coke on her flight from Charleston to the Big Apple. Dick and Jim are of course using this as an example of Becky's big quest for fame and money. They say she passed out reporters' business cards to jurors after the trial and had warned the jury that the media was going to be angling to interview them after all of this was said and done. Do you want to know why she did that? Because it's true. She was preparing them for an onslaught. Jurors are under no obligation to speak to reporters after a trial, and a lot of them don't want to talk but reporters try anyway. Becky seems like someone who wanted to make things as comfortable as possible for people who were sacrificing so much of their time to perform civic duties. She also comes from this deep southern world where people, especially women are expected to be polite, even to their enemies. And the thing about Becky she seems like someone content with her world. If she comes off as someone as dazzled by being at the center of the universe for the six weeks, it's because she was. Who wouldn't be it was such a crazy experience for everyone. And Becky is honest about it. She doesn't downplay her all she's not hiding who she is. And Dick and Jim are taking advantage of that. They are conflating her excitement with something more nefarious. And worse, she agreed to be on the FoxNation docuseries, which many people see as the Dick and Jim project. And they are now using her notes to the producers asking for a mention that she is an author as evidence that she is some evil doer who needed Alex Murdaugh to be found guilty to sell herself published books. It's as far fetched to us as members of some unknown cartel showing up at Moselle to kill two people who weren't planning to be there, then realizing, Oh, they forgot their weapons for this hit, but then looking out because they find a rifle and a shotgun lying around, right as Alex Murdaugh was tooling back up to the house on his golf cart. Now, the more problematic part of this scheme of Dick and Jim's is what one of the 18 Jurors has sworn and an affidavit about what Becky had told jurors during the trial. If Becky did in fact instruct jurors not to be misled by Alex's testimony, then that is an issue.

Liz Farrell 50:59

So far, though, according to our Cup of Justice co-host, Eric Bland, who is representing four of the jurors, and according to the state's response to Dick and Jim's motion, the evidence is not corroborating Juror 630's claims so far. You heard that though right. There is one juror who is claiming that Becky gave that instruction



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to the jury so far. The other juror affidavit that Jim has is about the Facebook post, and it's these Facebook posts that Dick and Jim are using as bluff. Juror 785 was removed from the jury in early March because there were allegedly three people who said she was talking about the case outside of court. She was not removed from the jury because of the Facebook post. And yet there are three affidavits about this post. Apparently Becky says she saw a post from someone claiming to be the juror's ex husband on a Facebook page talking about how this juror was speaking about the case outside of court. When asked to produce this post Becky says she couldn't find it. But an assistant was able to find another post of this man apologizing for his rant. The man who is apologizing, though, turns out was not this jurors ex husband but rather some random guy from Georgia who had the same name. Dick and Jim filed this man's affidavit this past week. He swears he's not the guy who is married to the juror and he explains that his apology was not related to the Murdaugh case, but rather a family dispute. Whoopy, tell us more about how a person who grew up without the internet and social media couldn't find something she saw on Facebook and how another person tried to help by searching the man's name and found something unrelated. That literally describes 50% of the emails we get from armchair detectives who think they found something in social media that might be helpful. It is telling to us that this Facebook thing is the hill, pun intended, that Dick and Jim are willing to die on. It almost makes you wonder if some aspect of this is personal for them. Did Becky Hill hurt their feelings or something?

Mandy Matney 53:02

Oh wait, she might have. Our last impression of Becky's book is that even though she was polite when she did it, she served up some spice for Dick and Jim. In one chapter, Becky Hill went hard on Jim Griffin, well hard for Becky Hill. While researching for the book, Becky said she listened to a podcast where Jim Griffin spoke about the trial and she said she was shocked at how disrespectful Jim seemed toward her office and to Judge Newman. Specifically, she talked about how the Murdaugh family repeatedly violated Judge Newman's courtroom rules when it came to interacting with Alex Murdaugh and how the court had to move the family to a row further back after they were caught giving Alex a John Grisham book. Becky is clear in her book that Jim knows they broke the rules. Yet he tried to spin the story and blame the court for the unfair treatment. She included some spicy tidbits about how there was tension and disagreements among the defense team throughout the trial. But Becky really stuck it to Jim when she talked about his closing argument,



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which she described as very robotic. She included some hilarious comments from a local news stations YouTube feed, like one that said his closing argument felt like a middle schooler giving a report about a book he didn't read. And another said I'm convinced this guy practice what might be the most important closing argument of his career one time in his car on the way to the courthouse. Ooh, burn. She also had this to say:

DAVID MOSES 54:40

Word is from someone on the defense team that Alex had been practicing and perfecting his snot and crying display for weeks.

Mandy Matney 54:48

In the words of Judge Newman, oh boy. I point this out because it's important to note just how fragile these men are. Their egos are everything. And when a nice southern lady like Becky Hill even dares to throw stones at their fragile, hollow selves, this is what happens. This is why a lot of people don't speak up against the good ol boys. This is why so many people just play nice with them. I also have to say that Becky made it a point to be respectful with Dick Harpootlian. In her book, she said she enjoyed working with him and quote, "you just have to laugh at his courtroom antics." She wrote, "he tries to get under your skin and tick you off. His bark is worse than his bite." Now that Dick Harpootlian has accused Becky Hill of jury tampering in front of the entire world, I would love to know if she feels the same about Dick. This is another good life lesson for all of us. Even if you play nicely with the bad guys, they will still burn you. Dick and Jim are ruthless. And this is what ruthless men do. Team Murdaugh is once again selling us apples but handing us oranges. Like we said in Cup of Justice two weeks ago, we see what they're doing very clearly, and we think that their case is weak. According to a video that was shown to us a few weeks ago taken by the woman who reported Juror 785 to Judge Newman, Team Murdaugh is well aware that Judge Newman did not remove the juror because of her husband's Facebook post, the thing Dick and Jim are so focused on. Judge Newman did not remove this juror because of something Becky Hill found or told him or said. She was removed because two people who were not on the jury signed affidavits saying that she had spoken to them about the case. And that was a clear violation of Judge Newman's order, which he repeated to the jury several times. Dick and Jim know this, and yet, they are wasting our time, anyway. They are relying on the fact that Judge Newman sealed the evidence in this matter to protect the identities of the



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juror and the sources who said she was talking about the case. They know it is not public information. So they cannot be corrected or fact checked on what they say when it comes to the removal of a juror and what was behind that decision. This video, however, is something they can't control. It shows Dick standing on a porch asking questions that seem to be designed to show that Becky had something to do with this woman coming forward. But the woman clearly tells him no, she did not speak with a clerk of court. She came forward because she felt it was the right thing to do. It is important to know how stressful this situation is for people who just want to do the right thing. They did not ask to be a part of this. And now they're thrown into the center of it because of Dick, Jim and Alex. When we first learned of the video, we knew it would likely be a piece of evidence in the state's defense of these allegations, which is why we have been careful about mentioning it, to protect the integrity of the state's response and to protect the identity of the people involved. We made a conscious decision not to publish the video. We feel confident that the state will disprove these allegations from Dick and Jim. And that is ultimately what matters here, which is why we are not sharing the video right now. And unfortunately, Becky inadvertently helped them do it by publishing a book before Alex's case made its way through the appellate court. Becky handed it to them and now they're using it to bolster the words of one juror to sensationalize the words of another juror and to misrepresent the reason a juror was removed. They have built a Trojan horse out of all of it. And there it sits at Judge Newman's door. And they are going to keep trying to shove it through as long as the system allows them to. We could debate all day about whether or not Becky's book was ethical. We could also talk about whether or not some of the things she did and shared in her role as clerk of court for the trial of the century could result in ethics violations. But the thing is that the defense wants us to think that Becky being unethical automatically equals a new trial for Alex Murdaugh. We have to separate those two things. Becky being unethical if she does not at all carve a smooth path for a new trial. If Dick and Jim's claims are true, and that is a huge if at this point considering their track record, there must be serious repercussions for Becky Hill. And if there was jury tampering as much as it pains me to say Alex Murdaugh should get another trial. But if those claims are not true, the court must shut the door on Dick and Jim's Trojan horse games once and for all. No more manipulating the media with half truths, no more wasting taxpayer time, and no more dragging women who dare to bruise their fragile egos. South Carolina's justice system could forever change with the outcome of this. I can only hope that those with authority understand the consequences at



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stake and take a stand for what is right. Stay tuned, stay pesky and stay in the sunlight.

True Sunlight is created by me, Mandy Matney, co-hosted by journalist Liz Farrell and produced by my husband, David Moses. True Sunlight is a Luna Shark Production. Right, Luna?

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