



## EPISODE 30: In a Broken System, Victims and Their Families Get Absolutely No Respect

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[00:00:00] **Mandy Matney:** Hello and Happy Monday. I'm really happy to share today's episode with you because we dove deeper into a topic that is always on my mind: victims' rights, not just victims' rights, but how our justice system treats victims across the board, which is not good. Over the past few years, I've heard story after story about how victims have been disregarded, not listened to, and flat-out ignored. It's disheartening, and it needs to change. Eric and I were recently at the annual Victims Rally at the South Carolina State House steps. It was yet another reminder of how important it is that we all work together, make more noise about the things we see that are wrong, and do everything we can to empower victims. Without victim empowerment, the system doesn't stand a chance at changing. Now, let's get into it.

[00:01:12] **Liz Farrell:** Cups up, guys.

[00:01:13] **Mandy Matney:** Cups up.

[00:01:14] **Eric Bland:** Cups up.

[00:01:14] **Liz Farrell:** How's your week?

[00:01:15] **Mandy Matney:** Week is good. But I want to start out by saying, I have very vivid dreams, and I had a dream that I was very mean to the both of you, and I feel like I need to apologize for dreams so. You know when like you — do you guys have vivid dreams like that?

[00:01:31] **Eric Bland:** I do. I do.

[00:01:31] **Mandy Matney:** And then, you see the person and you're like, I was so terrible, and you feel bad. So I woke up and was like, oh, thank God. I don't want to be horrible like that. That was —

[00:01:42] **Eric Bland:** Liz, you missed Mandy gave a great speech on Tuesday.

[00:01:46] **Liz Farrell:** I know.



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[00:01:47] **Mandy Matney:** Aw, thank you.

[00:01:48] **Eric Bland:** She was polished and it was strong and her cadence was good and.

[00:01:52] **Mandy Matney:** Thank you.

[00:01:53] **Liz Farrell:** Excellent.

[00:01:53] **Eric Bland:** It was a nice gathering.

[00:01:56] **Mandy Matney:** Thank you.

[00:01:57] **Liz Farrell:** Yeah. That, I think, you know, I've thought a lot about the Victims Rally because did you guys see that Natalee Holloway — do you guys remember the Natalee Holloway case?

[00:02:08] **Eric Bland:** Yeah.

[00:02:08] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah.

[00:02:08] **Eric Bland:** Yeah, Aruba.

[00:02:09] **Liz Farrell:** Yeah. Well, so it's been 18 years since she went missing and the guy who's suspected of killing her, Joran —

[00:02:16] **Eric Bland:** Van der Sloot. Joran van der Sloot.

[00:02:19] **Liz Farrell:** Van der Sloot, right. He's getting extradited to the United States, finally. So it's been 18 years. She was 18 when she went missing. And her mother said something interesting. Her mother said she would be 36 years old now. It has been a very long and painful journey, but the persistence of many is going to pay off. Together, we are finally getting justice for Natalie. And that reminded me of the rally, Mandy. Just how sort of everyone, one, not ever giving up hope that you'll find justice, but two, she's recognizing that it took a whole lot of people making that noise. So yeah, I was thinking about the rally because of how that case never went away and it just shows you that you just have to keep pushing forward and make that noise however you can.



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And I was thinking just the Victims Rally was sort of maybe hopefully a jumping off point for empowering more people, more families to do the things that they need to do, not just what they need to do, but like teaching them how to scare the system into doing the right thing. Isn't that kind of what it is, Mandy?

[00:03:17] **Mandy Matney:** Karl Stoller, in particular, and several of the victims who spoke kind of said the same thing that really resonated with me, which was we were doing this not only for our cases, but we know that how important this is for other people, and we want you to know before you become a victim of this system because — and you never know when it will happen to you. And I thought it was really interesting. Representative Joe White said that, too, which was, it's kind of hard to get people to care about the justice system because until they're wrapped up in it, and until they have something horrible happen to them, they have other things to worry about, like schools and roads and other priorities for politics. But the justice system, we have to care about other people in order to care about it. And all of the people there were not just there for their cases. They were there for everybody, and I thought that was really important.

[00:04:15] **Eric Bland:** Every victim's and survivor's stories were unique, so unique. But the kind of thread that weaved them together was a sense of loss and frustration by our government and the system, like bewildered, like, how did people not care for what happened to my child? Or why is why am I not getting any communication? You know, Ms. Boyce talked about that, you know, she received one phone call in like four years. And Karl, he said that, you know, okay, they're going to reopen the case again and he got all excited. You know, they gave him false excitement. And then, he said, it's been 10 months and we haven't received a phone call. And so it's just a sense of loss, a sense of frustration and bewilderment, like do we even count or are we part of the equation or are we just the last number on a list of things that you guys got to care about.

[00:05:14] **Liz Farrell:** You know, I think victims are very inconvenient to bureaucrats in so many ways because it's emotional and they obviously want to hold — they want accountability that they're not getting. But this is going to sound funny what I'm about to say, but I'm not making a joke. When I was working at the sheriff's office, it sort of dawned on me that they needed like the Chick-fil-A training. Have you guys ever heard of that Chick-fil-A training for customer service? It's like Chick-fil-A has the best customer service in the



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country, so a lot of other companies, I think, will use their training, just — Basically, it's the communication, not only the ingress and egress of the parking lot, but the communication of how do they expedite these orders in a way that it's fast and accurate, and it's communication. So it was almost on my mind to suggest that to the deputies because — or to the sheriff's office — because I think there's just so much that happens where they think that they have to have answers for these victims when they talk to them, but just checking in is so important and letting them know that it still matters to them. And I don't know that victims necessarily expect answers so much as recognition that you still exist and your kid's life mattered and all of that. So I don't know. I do think that they need to change across the board how the solicitors' offices and how law enforcement officers consider victims. Victims advocates do so much, but I do think that communication is just — if you're gonna ask us how to invest our money as taxpayers, invest it in that, you know? If you're — I want more money toward whatever. If you have to hire a liaison, someone who makes phone calls every day, do that.

[00:06:50] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah. Someone who has an Excel spreadsheet of like, this victim hasn't been contacted for this long. Let's check up on that. And again, in a — like you said, just a little bit of like validation and recognition was a common theme that I noticed and I've noticed over the years talking to victims that they just get so, so upset by. They feel dismissed by the system and then they start to feel crazy when they are asking questions and they're getting shoved to the side and then that makes them feel worse and more alienated. So little things, and you're right, Liz, like little things that could just make them feel — and also, but at the same time, we don't want just a fluff job that's convincing victims that something's happening or anything like that. But I think that there's definitely a huge gap in the system that we're not recognizing and that a lot of people don't recognize until it happens to them.

[00:07:55] **Eric Bland:** Yeah. I mean, you know, it's the old saying, communication goes a long way in my profession. If I'm not returning client calls or I'm not advising them along the way of what's going on or not creating false expectations or telling them, look, if a couple of months goes by and nothing happens, it doesn't mean your matter's not progressing. It's just the system. You know, the common theme is it creates anxiety when you're not informed. You get anxious, you get these weird thoughts in your head. You think you're being persecuted. You think something's being done behind your back. And I was going to say, I noticed it in Sandy Smith. I remember when I met her for the first time a year ago, I wouldn't say she was jumpy, but, you know, she was nervous and, you know, anxious. And now today, she's not.



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If you see her, there's a piece about her when we did some interviews at the rally, and really it's because she's being told what's happening. And it's not that, oh, we're going to find the person who murdered your son, but we're working on it. That's all they wanted to know, these victims, that they're working on it. And I talked to Ms. Boyce and she had Sandy's jumpiness that Sandy had like a year ago. It's hard. They look at you differently with the — should I really open up to you? Are you trying to use — I mean, these people are anxious. That's all I can say. You know, am I making sense, Mandy?

[00:09:30] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah, and I've noticed that too with Sandy and every time I see her I get — I'm so proud of her and happy for her 'cause she is. She's growing confidence in herself, and you can see it. And she has evolved so much in the time that I — since I first met her. If you think she was jumpy a year ago, it was — But she had every right to be because when Liz and I first met her, she was just told over and over that basically she was crazy and that she should shut up and not say anything. And so what do you do in that situation? You become jumpy. You become anxious. You become suspicious of everybody.

[00:10:09] **Eric Bland:** Distrusting.

[00:10:09] **Mandy Matney:** Distrusting. And then, more people are like, what's going on with this lady? She seems weird. And it's a cycle, and I've noticed that with a lot of the people that I talk to. It's like they could seem crazy. But also, what's happening to them would make anybody crazy.

[00:10:27] **Eric Bland:** Correct.

[00:10:28] **Mandy Matney:** So it goes hand in hand, and that was a common theme. I talked to a lot of people, and I'm sure you did, too, Eric, that just had these insanely sad, horrific stories.

[00:10:40] **Eric Bland:** It's horrible.

[00:10:40] **Mandy Matney:** That you can't even imagine happening. But just us being there, you could see that they could — they really got validation in just having somebody to listen to them and just —





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[00:10:53] **Eric Bland:** And it's amazing victims become extremely eloquent at being able to tell the story of their loved one or what happened. If you ask them to give a speech on politics, they probably couldn't tell you or whatever, banking or whatever. But somehow, they get in the zone when they're talking about their loved one, and they're the most powerful, poignant speeches you can listen to because they're from the heart. They're so genuine. And at the same time, you could tell when they're talking, they're visualizing their child and there's a nice smile that you see. It's just — they become so eloquent that it's amazing. And these people are people who don't speak in front of people. But when they tell that story and they want to tell that story, it's an extremely compelling story to listen to.

[00:11:47] **Mandy Matney:** I was extremely impressed with Karl Stoller and his speech and he — we spoke to him last year I remember, Liz, for the Bowen Turner case, and he's even evolved more. And, you know, time has passed since his daughter has died and — but more of a confidence and more of a he has a demand in his voice now. It's more of a — you know, when we talked to him a year ago, he was like all of this horrible and he could barely speak without crying about his daughter, which, of course. And now, he's in the point where really, really focused towards advocacy and saying things that go straight to the heart of anyone and that people will listen to.

[00:12:35] **Eric Bland:** They have a sense of urgency in their voice. You can see.

[00:12:38] **Mandy Matney:** Right.

[00:12:39] **Eric Bland:** And a sense of, okay, I've had enough of you spoon-feeding me bull. Now, I'm taking ownership of this. And you could tell there's a sense of urgency.

[00:12:50] **Liz Farrell:** You can sort of see a genesis like you were saying, Mandy, because do you remember when Britney Spears first spoke up? You know, she's been under the conservatorship for so long and then she goes to court and she spoke at like the most rapid pace you've ever heard. Just like — and people use that as evidence that she was crazy and, you know, saying to themselves, like, well, no wonder she's under conservatorship. But my friend immediately recognized it. She said that's somebody who's never been listened to. She's trying to cram in everything she can because she knows the person she's speaking to is going to stop listening at any moment. So she's trying to get it all in there and that's why she's talking so fast. And I think that



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there's some of that you see with victims, especially when they're sharing their story with you for the first time as us being journalists and they want to get us interested or get, you know, get us to help them. They're so used to telling that story that they're telling it at rapid-fire pace. And it's because they know that the person that they're talking to is going to stop listening at some point. So there's that.

[00:13:50] And then there's the exhaustion. I remember from Karl Stoller and Sandy, both had that same fatalism, which is just it felt like anyway, not necessarily spiritually that they thought it wasn't worth fighting for, but just an exhaustion. Just the not knowing what to make of things and but it's nice to see. I think the advocacy portion of this, unfortunately, has to happen, and I think that's — I say unfortunately because I would say, like, having some violent act happen to your child or your family member, it's like getting struck by lightning, right? Like it's unfair. It's uncalled for. You can't control it. And suddenly, there you are, a person who's been struck by lightning. So it's almost not fair to ask the victims to, you know, you're going to have to fight for — you're going to have to fight for this. But I think we're at a part in history where they will, and they do have to fight because we know as journalists, and you know as a lawyer, Eric, that once you start asking questions of the right people, they get scared and they get scared into doing the right thing. So victims speaking out has a lot of effect, you know?

[00:14:53] **Eric Bland:** Be pesky.

[00:14:55] **Liz Farrell:** Right. Be pesky, exactly. Exactly.

[00:14:58] **Mandy Matney:** And like you said earlier, victims tend to be seen as an inconvenience to those in power. But the pesky victims, the empowered victims, those are the real threat to people in power. And I think that that was just such a moment for me looking around at like, wow, these people not only have a story to tell, but they're on a mission and they have the help of all these other people. You can only do so much when it's you screaming from the rooftop, but when you're empowered by a group of like-minded individuals that — and it's good that they could — like, I saw so many — the Stoller family hugging Sandy was a really, really sweet moment that I got to witness. And these victims really standing by each other and just able to connect in a way that so many other people can't and that's just a really powerful thing. And we'll be right back.



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[00:16:02] **Liz Farrell:** So speaking of victims being seen as an inconvenience, we read a story in *The Post and Courier* today that was about Judge Manning's final days in office. And it's funny because I believe we FOIAed for the same information that the Department of Corrections has now released, showing what Judge Manning did, which is, I guess, in the last year and a half of his service on the bench. He gave — was it 27 sentence reductions?

[00:16:30] **Mandy Matney:** Let me look.

[00:16:31] **Liz Farrell:** Something like that. Six of them, I think, at least in the last day. Is that right? Along with the Jeroid Price.

[00:16:38] **Mandy Matney:** 27 sentence reductions between January 2022 and eight in mid-April 2023. So mid-April, mid-April. When did the Jeroid Price stuff come out? Late April, right?

[00:16:52] **Eric Bland:** I thought they learned about it March 15th.

[00:16:54] **Liz Farrell:** He got released March 15th, but we didn't find out about it until mid-April.

[00:16:58] **Mandy Matney:** I just wonder if it's probably stopped since.

[00:17:01] **Liz Farrell:** Yeah, I guess so.

[00:17:02] **Eric Bland:** I do know that he — I think some of those sentences may have been people that served a lot of time for weed or drugs or something like that. Not everybody was a, you know, the Jeroid Price situation.

[00:17:16] **Liz Farrell:** No, but they — I mean, a couple of them did have violent crimes attached to them.

[00:17:20] **Eric Bland:** Yes.

[00:17:20] **Liz Farrell:** So I didn't see any weed ones, but not that they had that. But the story didn't say who the attorneys were for each of those.





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[00:17:28] **Eric Bland:** Oh, really?

[00:17:28] **Liz Farrell:** Except that Todd Rutherford, Representative Todd Rutherford, had two other cases of the eight, I guess, it was eight or so. I can't remember. Yeah. So I say sentence reductions. I see that there were eight from Judge Manning signed between January 22nd, 2023 until mid-April 2023. I thought he was off the bench. I don't understand that.

[00:17:53] **Eric Bland:** Yeah, he was off the bench December 31st.

[00:17:55] **Liz Farrell:** So what's going on there? I think that must be a mistake.

[00:17:58] **Eric Bland:** I don't know whether —

[00:17:59] **Mandy Matney:** Right, and the — and I can't wait to — we're still working on getting this report, and I can't wait to —

[00:18:06] **Eric Bland:** Did he take senior status or is he completely retired, Liz? Have you checked that out?

[00:18:11] **Liz Farrell:** Yeah, I haven't checked that out. He's — the last time I looked, he was still listed as a judge. So I'm going to guess that any senior status he took is probably going to be under consideration, right? I mean, one of the things that I thought was interesting in this report is that a spokesperson for the governor, for Governor Henry McMaster, said this report highlights the need for tougher criminal penalties and confirms the General Assembly needs to act to close the revolving door on violent offenders and crack down on career criminals and illegal guns. This is what they said in conjunction with this report being released showing that Manning had more sentence reductions. None of the things that that spokesperson mentioned is the actual problem here. It's not about needing tougher criminal penalties. It's not about the General Assembly needing to act to close a revolving door. This is about legislator-lawyers who had an opportunity to have this sort of skids greased for them where they can make these things happen. That's why I think it's important that we find out who these other attorneys are. But more than that, the issue isn't — the General Assembly is the reason why we're talking about this right now because they're the ones in 2010 who added this law for substantial assistance in sentence reduction and putting the power of sentence reduction in the hands of circuit court judges and solicitors. So I



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don't see — the governor doesn't seem to — like I feel like they're going to use this as an opportunity to do the wrong thing instead of dealing with what the actual issue is, which is that these were done in secret and they were done without letting the victims know.

[00:19:43] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah. I agree. And I wanted to read the part that worried me the most was this paragraph that said in one order — and again, from Caitlin Ashworth of *The Post and Courier*. She did a really good job on that story. In one order, Manning made note that the state was in compliance with the Victim's Bill of Rights and that there were attempts to reach the victims. However, no victims showed up to court because calls to them were not returned, numbers were no longer in service, or no voicemail was set up. And it's like, him making note of that just seems so wrong to — like, don't worry, the Victim's Bill of Rights. It's, again, like a checklist instead of, what are we doing here? And yeah, like, one of them is a man convicted of attempted murder. One of them was an attempted kidnapping, right, assault and battery with intent to kill and two counts of kidnapping. Like these aren't all — I feel like if there was 27 people in our system as a whole, I'm sure we could find a lot less violent criminals than a lot of these people. And I'm all for — I don't think people should be in jail for weed or anything like that or a lot of people are in jail for the wrong reasons. But I don't know about this case. And we all know the Jeroid Price case, like, they lost the benefit of the doubt by assuming that they are doing the right thing with these secret orders through Jeroid Price in my opinion.

[00:21:19] **Eric Bland:** Yeah. Like I don't have a problem with the concept that somebody can be reformed over 20 years as opposed to a 40-year sentence and he needs or she needs to have the state look at what I've done for 20 years. Have I been a model prisoner? Have I educated other people? Have I gotten educated the circumstances? I don't think I want to take away the discretion or the substantial assistance to lower sentencing if it's warranted. But what I do want to take away is this secret order with lack of notice so that everybody can be heard and then it's a fully informed decision being made. I don't think we're critical of a 35-year sentence being reduced to 21 years — I think what we're being — or 19. I think we're critical of the process, right? Isn't that where we are?

[00:22:15] **Mandy Matney:** Right. And, I mean, the fact that it took all of this to find out that there was 27 of them. If Jeroid Price didn't happen the way that it did, how — we would have never known. The public would have probably



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never known. And again, it's like, because it's secret, it's a problem. And if there were 27, then I would be fine with that. A 27, this is why he was released, blah, blah, blah. Little paragraphs for each one. From the government, a nice press release, this is what happened. But instead, it's this extremely secretive process and turns out some of these guys seem to be like violent criminals and that's a problem. It's the process.

[00:23:00] **Liz Farrell:** This goes back to — do you remember, Mandy? Like I think we've talked about this before on the show. But back in 2016 when the Hurricane Matthew happened, it was really difficult for us to get, I think, the government to understand that when we want communication, when the public wants communication, they're not talking about like you need to give us all the details all the time. We're just saying, like, keep a constant stream of communication going. Make sure that the government knows or the public knows to turn to you for information, so they're not getting it on Facebook, etc. etc. I think what is happening here is almost the same thing that happens in law enforcement agencies where they say, oh, we couldn't update you on this active shooter situation because we didn't want to give away information about the investigation. So what they're trying to say here with an early release is that we don't want you guys to — we can't share these. Sorry, guys, we can't — it had to be secretive because if we gave — this was a secret information that was given to us by a confidential source, you know, these guys were confidential sources to us in the jail and or the prison and we want them to — we can't say what they said to us, so we didn't tell you anything. And it's like, we're not asking you for what they said to you. We're not asking you to tell us what the investigation said. But certainly, you can tell us the level, their type of investigation. You can tell us what this person did in a general sense to warrant that or you could just, you know, have the hearing open so that we at least have the opportunity to see what's going on.

[00:24:21] That said, I wanna make sure that we're clear about this that Judge Manning did not sign 27 orders releasing prisoners. He signed eight between January 2022 and April 2023. 27 were signed by judges in the circuit court. So that's why we see the April 2023. So it's eight, eight that Manning did, and three of them, I believe, were Todd Rutherford. So we need to find out who the other five.

[00:24:47] **Mandy Matney:** Three.

[00:24:47] **Liz Farrell:** Three of the eight with Manning.



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[00:24:49] **Mandy Matney:** Three of eight.

[00:24:50] **Liz Farrell:** Yes. So one of the things we've been talking about related to this case is the Jeroid Price billboard that popped up. Where was that, Mandy? Is that in Columbia?

[00:25:00] **Mandy Matney:** No, it's actually the northern part of the state by where Carowinds is. So I think that's by Charlotte, right?

[00:25:08] **Liz Farrell:** Yes, yes.

[00:25:09] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah, so like by the NC/SC border. And yeah.

[00:25:15] **Liz Farrell:** Well, start at the beginning. Start with the \$30,000. So we complained that the Department of Corrections, or sorry, the Richland County Board Sheriff's Office was only offering \$5,000 for information leading to the arrest of and capture of Jeroid Price. So what — when did they raise it to \$30,000 and why?

[00:25:33] **Mandy Matney:** They raised it this week and I believe the Department of Corrections is involved. At first, it was Richland County that was \$5,000, then it was the Department of Corrections and they raised it to \$30,000. And so initially, we thought \$5,000. Ha ha. Like cute. Who is going to turn this guy in for five grand? That's insane. And also, why aren't the elected officials who are responsible for this paying for this? And, again, it's not just the five grand. But it's — I keep thinking about all the state resources in general that are being used for this. It's terrible.

[00:26:15] **Liz Farrell:** But you spoke out, Mandy, on Twitter about the \$30,000 and how just basically what you just said now, and a spokesperson for the Department of Corrections responded, correct?

[00:26:27] **Mandy Matney:** The spokesperson for the Department of Corrections corrected me. Get it?

[00:26:33] **Liz Farrell:** That's funny.

[00:26:35] **Mandy Matney:** And she said, "It's not taxpayer money, Mandy. It is from seized assets, a seized assets fund, and that's how we got it." And that



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just opens up a whole 'nother can of worms. There's a lot of huge, huge problems with police seizing assets and how they do it and why and where that money goes. But despite that, it's still public funds. It's still the public's funds and state resources that are being used for this guy and not for other people because that's how — I mean, I don't think a lot of people stop to think about how these things work. But it is not a — tax money is not just an endless pit that you can just — whenever you utilize funds for one thing, it's being taken away from something else, and that's what I keep thinking about with the Jeroid Price case. I'm like, it'd be nice if we could get some Stephen Smith billboards or years ago if they could have done that. And I'm all for looking for this guy and putting resources for it because I do believe that that is important. But on the same on the flip side, to me, seeing that billboard was just — it was a huge sign that like, this is what government. This, huge sign, billboard — I saw the sign. It was a huge sign. Like this is — I know, gosh, and I'm all over the place. But this is what government failure looks like. Like this guy, they got him. They used all the resources to get him years ago. They got a good sentence on him and that was — and a lot of victims just want that from the system, but they don't get that. But despite all that, they got him. And then, due to a secret order and three elected officials, he was released. And now, we just have this mess and we're looking for this fugitive who could be anywhere. He's probably not anywhere in our state, but they're looking for him and they're spending resources on it. And it's — and then, at the same time, we have no word on any accountability with the people who did this. And that's my problem.

[00:29:00] **Eric Bland:** Is Jeroid Price really — does the government, does Todd, does Manning, does Byron, do they really want him caught? Because I have a feeling he may know exactly how this happened. He may have been in there when things were said or promised. He may have been negotiating on his behalf on what he wanted inside. So he has a story to tell when he gets caught. I don't think he's going to just say, "I was in another room." I think he could be saying, "I know exactly how this went down, and let me tell you how this went down, how I got out." So that could be interesting when he's caught, if he's caught, is he going to say, "You know what? I was made promises. Now, let me tell you how this happened. I'm going to tell you what you all want to know." Does he try to broker that information?

[00:29:54] **Liz Farrell:** Yeah.

[00:29:55] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah, that's very true.





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[00:29:56] **Liz Farrell:** I hope he's listening, Eric. I hope he's listening because maybe it didn't occur to him and now he could.

Now, he can think of it. I've been watching a lot of Harry Potter lately, the movies, again. And I think I just have this like even stronger sense of like right and wrong and what you should do to fight evil and all of that. And there's this part of me that I'm so — I'm not a vindictive person, generally speaking, but part of me wants to, like, start a fund to get one of those, like, billboard trucks. Do you know what I'm talking about? Like the skinny trucks, and just have a billboard, that billboard in particular, drive past Todd Rutherford's house all day long and like outside the statehouse and just all throughout Columbia. I think there should be more billboards because — and not for just the Jeroid Price getting him back because I do believe, you know, we can go overboard there, I guess. But the issue to me is just, like, it needs to be in their faces every day because Jeroid Price is now a symbol of what was allowed to happen because of this system that only works for a few. And I just think they should be reminded of it. But also, there's a part of me that wants the state to run up the bill to some astronomical number. Just give every deputy overtime, give every SLED member overtime just to make this right again and show the expense of it. Is there any way we could sue Todd Rutherford, Casey Manning, Byron Gipson to recoup this money civilly? Is there just any chance of that? Like could any ordinary citizen just say, you know, I've had enough of this and the reason our state's spending this money.

[00:31:33] **Eric Bland:** Judges and solicitors have immunity, absolute immunity, from being sued within the course and scope of their job so.

[00:31:40] **Liz Farrell:** Isn't that nice? Who wrote that law?

[00:31:43] **Eric Bland:** Manning and Byron and Todd Rutherford only owe duties to the Bar, and to be honest, with the court and to his client. He has no duty to the public. There's no privity of relationships. So he was exercising his duty for his client.

[00:32:02] **Liz Farrell:** And that's the problem though, right?

[00:32:04] **Eric Bland:** No, we don't want to — we want to make sure we're single-minded folks focused in representing our client right now.

[00:32:12] **Liz Farrell:** Yes, you do. But he also represents the public.



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[00:32:16] **Eric Bland:** Oh, as a representative. Yeah. Oh, yeah. That's a different story.

[00:32:21] **Liz Farrell:** So that's where the, yeah, the conflict of interest exists right there. And why are attorneys, Eric, in our state allowed to — why are legislators allowed to also have private practices where they can sue the state and they can defend people who are being prosecuted by the state? Why is that allowed?

[00:32:39] **Eric Bland:** Well, because we want lawyers, you know, presumably writing law because they know how to write it and presumably and make it clearer.

[00:32:50] **Liz Farrell:** Do you know any legislator who's written their own legislation?

[00:32:54] **Eric Bland:** Dick Harpootlian.

[00:32:55] **Liz Farrell:** Really?

[00:32:56] **Eric Bland:** Dick Harpootlian. Yeah. But it's not, you know, they have their legislative aides. I don't have a problem of lawyers having private practice, but I don't believe a legislature should appear before a state agency with his practice. Now, a court of law is not a state agency. But you can start exerting your influence more when you start going to state agencies. In court, at least, presumably there's a jury that you gotta talk to, but there's judges that make rulings along the way, so I do see that. But lawyers have a right to make a living. They just shouldn't be able to make it against the state who's paying their, you know, legislative salary.

[00:33:41] **Liz Farrell:** Well, that's right. I mean, I've seen instances where legislator-lawyers are representing private entities that are suing state agencies. And I know that there's caps through the insurance revenue fund, but I think there's a way around that. And so obviously, we need to look more into that before I start speaking about it. But it just seems like a huge conflict of interest. And what we're seeing, it's just like what good comes of it for the public? Nothing, as far as I'm concerned.



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[00:34:09] **Eric Bland:** They're also appearing before regulatory agencies seeking permits for clients to build docks and, you know, bars on the back of a restaurant and all that in front of these agencies that they are also sitting on the ways and means committee that they fund.

[00:34:25] **Mandy Matney:** It's a problem.

[00:34:26] **Liz Farrell:** And why doesn't this upset people?

[00:34:28] **Mandy Matney:** It's a problem. It upsets me.

[00:34:30] **Liz Farrell:** Yeah.

[00:34:31] **Mandy Matney:** I just think — I mean, the lawyer-legislator thing has got to be addressed in some way and we have to stop pretending that it's working because it's not. And I'm not saying by any means get rid of all lawyer-legislators, but they are a problem here, especially like defense attorneys that have conflicts of interest constantly between — if you're a defense attorney and you also represent the state of South Carolina, that's constantly against each other. Those are two different needs that are constantly going against each other so.

[00:35:11] **Eric Bland:** I also don't like that you have the January to July, you know, timeout that you can never litigate with the legislature. That's why there's a certain legislator, and I'm not going to name his name. He's a very powerful legislator right now. He's been — if you have a pretty big case, he'll be the fourth attorney named on that case, and it enables the case to go further than you wanted or he can use his influence. That's all I'm going to say, but he's turning up on every major case. And we'll be right back.

[00:35:59] **Liz Farrell:** We've seen that with the boat crash case because Speaker of the House Murrell Smith was attached to that case. He says he wasn't a part of it earlier than it was made public. But certainly, it looked to us like he was being brought on for the very reasons that you just mentioned, Eric. And one of the things that I do think we need to look into, and going back to like victims and empowering people, one of the things that you can do to affect change is just ask the right questions. And I think one of the questions that we need to ask out there is that these revenue streams that these legislator-lawyers have could be as simple as attaching — like, is there



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just a fee that you can pay to have somebody attach their name to the case and do no work? Is that allowed, Eric?

[00:36:42] **Eric Bland:** No. You have to have substantial responsibility or be willing to assume primary responsibility. But the fact of the matter is these guys are there in name only. But no. Lawyers often are brought in the case for specific reasons just to have a face. Many times in small communities, you'll have a lawyer sit who's a local lawyer with you through jury service in most of the trial and you'll pay them. And the, you know, just to make eye contact with the jurors that they know.

[00:37:13] **Liz Farrell:** We saw that in the with Randolph and Alex going to Greg Alexander's trial, which by the way, Greg Alexander, the Yemassee police chief that whose name came up repeatedly during the murder trial, you know that he was charged with exactly what we were talking about earlier with the asset seizure. So he was charged with taking, I believe it was \$10,000 from the civil asset forfeiture pile at the Yemassee Police Department. So it's kind of funny, though, I mean, like it's this sort of like — I don't know what kind of earmarks are allowed to be had on that money, but it's just funny that all things sort of circle back to the Murdaughs in many ways. So yeah, that was what Randolph and Alex did is they showed up just to show the jury that they are on this man's side. And then, the jury found him not guilty. Imagine that.

[00:38:05] **Eric Bland:** It was a quiet murder all week. If we look back on our week. You know, Monday, I did have a press conference on the Gloria Satterfield matter and to put to rest a lot of the canards that are being espoused by the Kool-Aid Harpootlian-Griffin drinkers on this case.

[00:38:24] **Liz Farrell:** What kind of feedback did you get from that, Eric? What are you hearing out there?

[00:38:28] **Eric Bland:** Really good. You know, on Twitter, I would say 99% positive. The articles that were written about the press conference, you know, we released the statements that Paul heard Gloria say "dogs" when she was at the bottom of the steps and Maggie saying how unruly these dogs were, particularly Bourbon, that he constantly gets under your feet, and then just really dispelling a lot of these notions of why Nautilus Insurance Company could come after the Satterfields or even Ronnie and me to get their money back that Alex stole. So once we started to talk about that, you know, all these other parties had reasons to settle that may not have anything to do with



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Gloria's fall, one could be they just didn't want to be associated with Alex. But two, they had the absolute right to turn to me and say and Ronnie and say, "Prove to us that she was tripped by dogs." They had their own lawyers. They exercised their own free agency. And in the release agreement, the Satterfields never represented anything to these people for them to pay them money. The only thing they said is, "We'll dismiss our claim, and we represent that we have the authority to execute this agreement." That's it. So no fraud was committed on these people for them all to pay the Satterfields this more than seven and a half million dollars, and the press got it.

[00:40:01] **Mandy Matney:** I was just looking and Drew Tripp tweeted the ruling for Alex's lawyers whether or not they get the money is supposed to come down today.

[00:40:14] **Eric Bland:** And then lo and behold, Judge Hall sent out his very brief form for an order that denied Alex the right to invade his IRA funds to get \$160,000 to pay Jim and Dick to do his appeal from the double murder conviction, and it's a big ruling. You know, I'm not one to quote a former unnamed president, but it was the perfect call, I think, by Judge Hall because he did not — it wasn't saying so much as, Alex, you can't have an appeal and you can't have the attorneys you want on your appeal and you can't, if you get the money, spend as much as you want on your appeal. I'm not, you know, making a decision on what your appellate rights are, but what I am saying is I'm sitting as an equitable judge in a court of equity, and I'm not going to permit you to butt to the front of the line and get ahead of all other victims and creditors, judgment creditors, like the Satterfields. What he is essentially saying is we appointed a receiver to marshal all your funds from wherever they may be, whether it's real estate, whether it's bank funds, whether it's liquidating personal property, and we're going to marshal those funds and then put them in court. And then, everybody's going to have to make their application for those funds, you included. He's not saying that Alex can't at the right time make an application and an argument why he would be entitled to those funds as opposed to the Satterfields or any other of the victims of theft that he had. But it is a significant victory for justice because it's telling Alex it's a different playing field. The rules have changed. You're not getting a special dispensation, and just because you send your highfalutin lawyers in court, and they're gonna say, oh, we did this for almost nothing, you know, \$521,000 of the \$600,000 that you allocated before went to expenses. I'd like to see that. I'd like to see them really itemize \$521,000 so that it is to — if it is to be believed that they only got \$79,000 in legal fees. Don't forget that





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they got \$500,000 for representing Paul in the DUI boating death, and he died within, you know, a year of that. So whatever happened to that fee? Did they just get to keep it? So there are so many questions, Mandy and Liz, that need to be asked before a court will just give a blank check to Alex or his lawyers. We don't see accountings being submitted to the court. I'm not saying that Jim Griffin misrepresented anything to the court. But before a judge is going to just take as gospel what Alex Murdaugh is saying, somebody is going to have to submit an accounting to support some of these allegations. But it was a great day. You know, it's not personal. I just don't think there wants to be a judge out there who's going to render a decision that will immediately face a lot of public criticism for slighting victims or creditors in order to benefit Alex, Dick, or Jim. But I could be wrong. What do you think, Liz?

[00:43:46] **Liz Farrell:** Yeah, I think it would be completely stupid of the judge to allow for that. I just don't see there being any chance, so any sort of consolation he might've demonstrated in the hearing might just be for the sake of, like, — and I don't want to say the appearance of, but at least to demonstrate that he is keeping an open mind about it to the likes of Mr. Jim and Mr. Dick.

[00:44:07] **Mandy Matney:** I feel like I always get beat up on Twitter when I say anything about this because it's like, I know that there's no system that's perfect. And I know that they — it would be impossible. But I'm just at the point where I feel like there has to be changes that we can improve because I know that there are changes that we can improve on and make it better that it's just — I mean, we have to be honest. Like our entire system until a few years ago was basically all old White men and for the last 50 years, let's say. And we can't ignore that. And rich white men, too, like power — like, and that's just a fraction of society, and they're making rules for everybody else. And I think what we've found in the last couple of years — and Eric, we looked around at the Victims Rally and what did you say to me?

[00:45:06] **Eric Bland:** They're all women.

[00:45:08] **Mandy Matney:** Why are there so many women? There's so many women here. And then, we talked about that. Why is it? Because women tend to be screwed by the system. They not only are more likely to be victimized, but they are more likely to be victimized by the system. And that's because



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women don't have, for years and years and years, did not have a part in creating the system. And now, we just have to deal with it.

[00:45:32] **Liz Farrell:** And we mentioned in our show this week in Murdaugh Murders Podcast that lawyers represent two-tenths of a percent of our population and yet make up almost a third of our legislature and women are 51.5% of the population and at least in the Senate make up 11% of the Senate. So it's kind of annoying that like, you know, when — I will say this. With the victims of Turner, the fathers were the ones that I think were able to give that case. Obviously, Dallas Stoller's sisters did an excellent job and Sarah Ford, excellent job. But it was hearing the voices of the fathers of two of the victims where — and maybe this is just me like ascribing to some patriarchal trope. But just feeling protected and safe and like, finally, okay, good. The men get it and they're not going to let this go and men will listen to men and that's a good thing. And but it just — it is disheartening that it's what's going to take. It's going to take more women speaking up and, again, Natalee Holloway's mother didn't give up and she's lived half of Natalee's life without her and she's getting, you know, hopefully, will get justice. So you just.

[00:46:39] **Mandy Matney:** And it takes men in positions of power who want the system to work for everybody, not just people who look like them. And I think, like, I think Karl is such an interesting individual because he looks like a Good Ole Boy. He sounds like a Good Ole Boy. He was law enforcement for Orangeburg County. And he even said, like, I believed in this system before all of this happened, and look what happened to me and my family and my daughter. And it really takes — when we say it takes a village, like, it takes the women getting in more positions of power, but also the men like Karl Stoller and Joe White. Joe White's a White man, an older White man. He's like 76. He's the oldest freshman in the House of Representatives, which I thought was awesome. And he cares about something that is not affecting just him. And I was like, that's amazing. I was blown away by his — and the way that he hugged Sandy. The way that he hugged the Stoller family and said I'm so sorry for what happened to you. I don't know much about the guy at all, but I was blown away. My mouth was agape because I just did not expect them from a man who looked like him. And I hate saying that but, like, he was just so — it's just the ability and it's sad that we want, like, we expect so little out of our elected officials. But man, just seeing a guy like him stand up and say, "This is wrong." And I'm — and say to the victims, I'm so sorry for what happened to you. I'm doing everything that I can to change it. Like that is what we need more of.



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[00:48:23] **Eric Bland:** It's the old John McCain line, you know? You got to think greater and bigger than yourself.

[00:48:27] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah.

[00:48:28] **Liz Farrell:** Absolutely. I feel like everything in our — that we've talked about over the last six months or so needs to have like a form and on that form needs to be a checked box that you either say yes or no. Like, and it's — does this only benefit you and your friends, or does this only benefit you? And if they can check this, if legislators can check that, then we know you're doing the wrong thing right now. So I feel like that's.

[00:48:49] **Mandy Matney:** Right.

[00:48:50] **Liz Farrell:** Yeah.

[00:48:51] **Mandy Matney:** And my thing is like, could it hurt other people if — am I hurting anybody by doing this? Who was hurt by this? Are more people hurt than helped by this? And it's just things like that that they just do not think of.

[00:49:08] **Liz Farrell:** That's right. And I honestly, I think as these weeks go on and we start looking deeper into the broken parts of the system, I do think we're going to have to have these like massive calls to action from people in South Carolina as well as outside of South Carolina in their own states because there are a few, you know, we talk about if you pay the fee to the attorney, they unlock a door. Well, I think journalists can unlock a door, too, by sharing some of the tricks of the trade and, what questions to ask and what forms to FOIA for. So I feel like we need to be doing more of that because one thing I feel like FOIAing for a right when we get off of this is Murrell Smith's all the cases that his name is attached to. If there's any lawyers out there that want to put his bar number into the system and send us a printout, that would be amazing. Thank you. Sorry, Eric, we're putting you in a terrible position all the time. I'm so sorry so.

[00:50:05] **Eric Bland:** No, you know, I mean, that's your little exercise you guys want to go do. Go do it.



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[00:50:14] **Liz Farrell:** So with that said, I think that we've covered the gamut and it's time to put our cups down.

[00:50:20] **Eric Bland:** Cups down.

[00:50:21] **Mandy Matney:** Cups down. Great work, everyone.

[00:50:32] **Outro:** This Cup of Justice bonus episode of the Murdaugh Murders Podcast is created and hosted by me, Mandy Matney, with co-host Liz Farrell, our executive editor, and Eric Bland, attorney-at-law, AKA The Jackhammer of Justice. From Luna Shark Productions.

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