



EPISODE 68: Karma is a Relaxing Thought + Scratching the Surface on Murdaugh Murdaugh's Crimes

Mandy Matney 00:04

Hello, happy Tuesday and go Chiefs. We have a lot to talk about. So get ready. We covered a lot of ground. In today's episode we discussed the ongoing problems with a judge known for doing favors for his legislator, lawyer friends, but why there's still something fishy about his ouster from the bench. We also talked about the Peter Strauss case and how it might hold some answers to where Alex Murdaugh's missing millions of dollars went. Peter is the suspended Hilton Head Island attorney we told you about in Season Two episode 29 of True Sunlight podcast back in December. He has pleaded guilty to a felony for helping hide millions of dollars for his clients who are also serving federal sentences for their roles in a billion dollar Ponzi scheme. Also, on today's show, we talk about Eric's motion for reconsideration of the court-appointed referee's decision on how to split Alex's assets. As we reported last week, Eric's clients received no money while p&p ed and Murdaugh law partner who gave Alex hundreds of 1000s of dollars in a personal loan got 29% of Murdaugh money. And on this episode, Premium Members will get to hear an extended version of today's episode, which will include our longer discussion about the defamation suit that was filed last week against our former employer, FITS News. Let's get into it.

Liz Farrell 01:39

Cups up guys. So congratulations, Mandy, on your giant win...on my giant win too. Now that I'm a Chiefs fan.

Mandy Matney 01:46

Thank you. Me too.



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Liz Farrell 01:48

That was awesome. I was very stressed out.

Eric Bland 01:52

Congratulations everyone because I consider the Chiefs, the sister team to the Eagles, because Andy Reid was with the Eagles and Scott Pioli and all the others came over when Andy came over all the general managers and player personnel directors and so they have had, they've had some connection between them. So I consider that a great organization.

Mandy Matney 02:12

Yeah, I'm really excited. Last night was extremely stressful. But I kind of now want them to go for three Super Bowls in a row. Nobody's done that before. And I think Patrick Mahomes and Travis Kelce and the team, I think they're the ones to do it. I'm excited. But yeah, they looked amazing last night.

Eric Bland 02:33

Travis isn't gonna retire and go on the road with...

Liz Farrell 02:37

No, I don't think so. But I will say it was very stressful watching it because I felt like, if they didn't win, it was going to be blamed on Taylor and the Swifties. And like this whole new crop of fandom that has happened. And then I was also thinking about how like, the NFL did not interest me. Like, I understand that there were like stories within the NFL, right, like these great stories of teamwork and heroism, and like, this guy's son's doing the same thing this guy did on the field and like



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that, like guys love that. Right. But that never appealed to me. And I think this is just like a statement in diversity is that once you bring women to the table, once you bring other people to the table, you start to see stories that are more reflective of your experience or what what interests you so like the whole Taylor/Travis sort of power couple, she's making all these people angry by being there and which is insane. And then, you know, we're so I think we've just started to understand the stories that are now being told, like, in a way that it's interesting to me in a way it wasn't before. So I don't know if you got...if you're seeing that same thing. Mandy is just a longtime fan.

Eric Bland 03:51

You see, you see the regular life of people like Patrick Mahomes. His father had, you know, his third DUI last week, you know, that happens to families. You see his brother is, you know, sometimes a little bit of an irritant to Patrick and Patrick's image. And then on the other side, you have Brock Purdy, I mean, the last guy drafted, he's living with a roommate, because he makes \$870,000 a year he can't afford his own place in San Francisco. And he's, he's in the second year of a four year like \$870,000 a year deal. That's a lot of money. But, you know, in that type of atmosphere in San Francisco, it's not. And here he is leading his team to the Super Bowl, handing off to a guy that's making, you know, \$40 million a year that disparity of it's all life. It's like life playing out in front of you. Yeah, and I never knew that.

Mandy Matney 04:48

Yeah, and I will say that like, I as a football fan, have watched football my entire life but never really watch it from the perspective of it not being inclusive to women. And I was watching it with David last night and



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some of the things that announcers say, it's just like very repetitive, just very like men pumping other men up. But I think it'll be interesting to see what the NFL does with this because they have this huge opportunity now to be more inclusive and to like maybe include some women announcers maybe include some different color commentators like the...

Eric Bland 05:28

Yeah, instead of sideline reporters. You know, Steve Spurrier started with Women's Day at USC where he, you know, said that for three days, the women would come in and they would learn plays and understand the game. And, you know, he, they would run routes. And I thought that was a great thing that USC did to get the women who accompany their husband in the games to now really understand what is going on in a football game. I think it's a great thing.

Liz Farrell 05:57

I think that's cool. But it's also patronizing, because I think that football was sort of this esoteric thing to me where it's like this set of rules that I just didn't really care to understand. But it's not that difficult. Like, it's not like it's something that I think only men can understand, obviously, like, you sit down, it's like I get it, I get what the plays are now, now that I know the rules, I get it. But it was never not understandable. But when you don't see, I tell the story a lot to guys who I think have trouble understanding what the world looks like from our eyes. And I said it to a former boss of mine who didn't really understand what the big deal was with South Carolina having an all male Supreme Court. And so I said, just take it back to Founding Fathers Day, and you have a group of men, white men that go into a room and they write the Declaration of



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Independence or they write the rules for what society is going to be right. Flip that and put that and make that all women make them all black, make them you know, a woman of color, make them you know smattering of white women, whatever. Do you think in your heart that those women are going to come out of that room with your interests represented? And the look of fear that I see cross, you know, men's faces when I say that, like this thought of like, oh, yeah, that's what it would be like that feeling that I have no, say that the people in the room don't look like me, don't think like me don't have my same experiences. So I take that to football, because I just think that like the thing that made it so interesting to me now, after all this time, was not just the sideline like the stories you're saying about the sidelines. But understanding Travis Kelce, as part of, you know, just a guy with a goal like a guy who's really good at what he does. And you know, if she does not have any shame about saying, "This is what I want, I want to get three in a row I want to get..." And I think now that I understand that and I can see it from Taylor's perspective, who's also the best at what she does, and saying shamelessly that I want that album of the year. I want these things, that I'm good at this. And I deserve these things. I think now I'm like completely I get it. So I don't mean to ramble.

Eric Bland 08:09

Yeah well, I'm going to be interested to see how much he supports her over the next eight months. You know, he does have offseason workouts and there's different mandatory things that he has to show up for, but there's going to be a large gap in time. You know, basically from February to April, and then from like late April to when camp starts, you know, she's on the road. This woman supported him and, and probably



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went to seven or eight or nine games this year and, you know, four concerts in a row and then flew across the world actually

Liz Farrell 08:43

Went to 13 games. It was 13, her favorite number.

Eric Bland 08:49

And my favorite number two, my daughter was born on Friday the 13th. And, you know, she flew across the world to see this. And I'm interested to see, does he support her in the offseason? Does he follow her to concerts and support her because she's working like, you know, nobody's working in the world? I mean, this girl is really a go-getter. And she's coming out with a new album.

Liz Farrell 09:14

Yeah, can't wait.

Mandy Matney 09:16

Yeah. And she's, she's an athlete too, and in a lot of ways and I don't think people realize that for the heiress tour. She ran on the treadmill for three hours a day, to train for performing for that long because when she performs it is like running like it requires serious hustle and nobody else has really done it for three hours in a row in the way that she has.

Eric Bland 09:43

And Mick Jagger.

Liz Farrell 09:45

Was not like dances and costume changes and



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Mandy Matney 09:49

Mick Jagger doesn't dance

Eric Bland 09:53

Costume changes, but he does do between seven and a half and 10 miles every concert on stage strutting.

Liz Farrell 09:59

Now he struts.

Mandy Matney 10:00

She's ready. Yeah, it's different. But it's incredible what they've both done. And I'm happy for them. And I'm here for it. And yeah, it's exciting. It's exciting to see them like after the game. We all, it's like, the high school cheerleader and captain of the football team.

Liz Farrell 10:18

But a better version of it, I think. Way better. Yeah. Much more like an emotionally intelligent version of it. Right? Much more equitable. Right.

Mandy Matney 10:28

And I'm glad that girls, little girls get to see a relationship that is supportive in that way. And just two extremely successful people not competing to not out trying to do each other, but just showing up for each other and respecting each other. And I think that that's a great thing to see.



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Liz Farrell 10:46

Yeah, not seeing each other as threats. And that's what I really like. Because I do think that that's what we run into when you're successful people around you see you as a threat to their own well being. So that's just been our experience, hasn't it? So sure has that said we have a lot to talk about today. The first thing I want to discuss though, is Judge Bentley Price who was removed by the JMISC. Insofar as he was not reelected, they did not advance his application. And he is the reason for that was because of the favors that he supposedly gives to lawyer legislators, right. And a couple of the arguments that have had behind the scenes with people who really believe that Judge Price was a detriment to justice in the Charleston area. And as you know, we're seeing it ourselves. Mandy and I saw an article this weekend in the Post and Courier about, I believe it was a rape case that he allowed this guy out on bond, even though this guy had already had a sexual assault on his record, and I think was out on bond or had committed a while he was on a bond for something else. So insert, like we see this with like, okay, yes, I agree. He looks like he gives favors to his friends. And he's, he has some strange decisions that he's made. But when you're holding one judge accountable for something that a lot of judges are doing, right, you know, and I know, Eric, I don't want to put you on the spot on that one. But we can just say we can put it all under the umbrella of Judge Carmen Mullen. And like, you can't, I don't understand how we can look at this one judge and say we're gonna hold you accountable for your behavior. But all these other judges who have had similar issues are worse in Carmen Mullen's case of accusations against her, how are we not holding her accountable? So I want to just bring this up, because I think Judge Bentley Price is going to, I think he's being used for something. And I'm just not sure what yet. I don't understand what

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his removal signifies. And what they were trying to do if it was good guys that had them removed. I know that Judge Bentley Price believes that he was removed by a powerful law firm in South Carolina, that they were behind his removal, because he wasn't ruling the way he wanted to be. They wanted him to rule. So I just don't know if you guys had any thoughts on that just in terms of like the unequal application of you know, because I do think it stands for something pretty dangerous if you have the JMSC just sort of plucking the ones that they want out. It's just such a it's right there in our face. And we're not talking about it.

Mandy Matney 13:20

Yeah, I mean, I've seen it. I've heard from a few lawyers legitimate problems with Bentley price, specifically with the way that he treats victims. I have heard some disturbing stories in that matter, however, I'm with you. Like, I really get annoyed whenever they have a sacrificial lamb in a scenario like this. And it's like, they all pretend like they're doing the thing, and they just take one slaughter it and move on. And instead of actually, that doesn't create any change. As long as there's other judges that are doing the same thing or worse. Nothing's ever gonna change and they have to hold them all accountable.

Liz Farrell 14:07

I mean, Eric, how transparent is this process for you guys from your end? Like how transparent it doesn't look very transparent from our end in terms of...

Eric Bland 14:16

No, no, it's not and but there were rumblings you know, it was a five-five vote or you just as easily one more vote, he gets out of committee and



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he holds his he holds his job a couple years ago, it was Tommy Russo who was terminated and didn't get renewed because he was posting some far right supportive, you know, the Maga and Trump and things on his Facebook page that the public felt that a judge should stay out of politics. And you know, he was on the bench for a long time. So it seems like they trim the hedges every couple of years. You get a little bit of a trimming, but not really a full cut. And there are some judges who seem to be beyond reproach and on the, not saying Carmen Mullen is that judge but it does seem like that we haven't heard anything. She sits on the bench. You know, some of the allegations that have been raised certainly by David Pascoe, certainly by me certainly in connection with the Satterfield case, really deserve to have a full full vetting of, and I think the public for us to have confidence in our system, and how judges are assessed and monitored and viewed. I think we need more sunlight on it, and we're not getting it.

Liz Farrell 15:31

No, we're definitely not getting it. And I know that there's been accusations out there that Judge Bentley Price, because he is a judge in a civil conspiracy case involving the beach family, that he was giving, you know, so-called favors to Mark Tinsley, the attorney who represents the Beach family. But Mark is not a legislator lawyer. He's not I don't know, what favors, you know, just in closely following that case. I haven't seen where that's the case. I guess, I guess what disturbs me is that we have a situation where it looks like the JMSC does not care about victims. Until now. Right. And I think that that's where I'm kind of annoyed about the whole thing. Do I think that Judge Bentley Price should be on the bench doesn't sound like it. But I also wish that they would have applied that same measure to other judges as well, because



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we have heard so many stories about judges across the state doing similar things. And I just don't know how we move forward. If it's almost just like, it's so blatant right now, and meanwhile, they're, you know, they didn't come up for a vote. So the vote was supposed to be taken on February 7th, right? The house has to vote in order to take a vote on the judicial candidates and now sort of they're being held open. We don't know when the Senate and the House are going to be voting to pass these judges through. And these judges are on the bench until, you know, July is when the switchover happens. So we have some time and in fact, Dick Harpootlian was the one who pointed that out that like, this whole thing, where the house is saying, like, this is dangerous for society that we haven't voted on our judges, this is dangerous for justice, we're putting the whole we're gonna rip apart the whole system, because we want this judicial reform, but we should be passing these judges through until we get judicial reform. It just all seems very disingenuous to me, and just like a bunch of drama, when they all know the solution is to do something different with how judges are chosen and they just don't want to do it.

Mandy Matney 17:39

Yeah, that's admitting the, that is choosing to take their own power away, and they won't do it. I was talking to a friend the other day about this, it's just so frustrating. And he just wants to scream it from the rooftops. The problem with judges in South Carolina is there is zero accountability. And in other states, when a judge is unpopular, as I would say, Carmen Wallen is right now, I live in the 14th. I don't think that she would be reelected in a normal election situation. But the people here have not. We have no control over her judgeship, we have no control we have there's nothing there's nothing voters could possibly



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do. But right our state people and they won't listen to us. And when you have a system like that, where there's just so little accountability, of course, judges are going to push and get away with whatever they want to and it's it's just the cycle and until the people who we elect actually are more concerned about the people that they represent us, yeah, US versus their own power and their own needs and the system that they want. It's never going to change. And it's really unfortunate.

Liz Farrell 19:03

What I'd like to see is an Eric, I don't know if they're, you have special access to this in any way. But I would love to see how members of the JMCS fare in front of judges so that we could see their motions. Do their motions get denied regularly, do their motions get granted regularly by certain judges? That would be an element.

Eric Bland 19:26

Do they get a hearing when they want a hearing? Do they get a continuance when they need a continuance?

Liz Farrell 19:34

You know, and I'm saying I just feel like so let's look at it. Could we suggest to the JMCS like, Okay, you guys don't want to change but how about you do this instead? How about the members who are legislators who I'm sorry, who are lawyers on your commission? How about you guys publish your stats in front of certain judges so that it's just so that we know that you it's not to say that like because you know, good lawyers are going to get there. motions granted, right? I mean, they're going to be able to make appropriate arguments that are effective. But at the same time, I think it is important for us to know that because it's so shady to the point where I don't know that if I'm, I don't know, if I'm



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just like a regular person out there and I see that I'm going up against a lawyer legislator, or somebody on the JMSC that I can trust the system at all that I can trust that the judge in front of me has any sort of impartiality. So I don't know why we're not. We're not talking. I know we talked about a lot, but I don't know why we're not talking more about the nitty gritty of that of just how can I look at this judge and think that you actually represent impartiality when the person who gave you your career is on the other table.

Eric Bland 20:49

I will tell you this guy's you know, I've appeared before many, many, many Circuit Court judges. You don't hear about those judges, because they by and large, are very good judges. They are diligent. They're beyond reproach. They cheat. They take their jobs seriously. They read what is before them. You only hear about the outliers. You know, you heard about Carmen Mullen. You heard I guess was Markley, Dennis in the Orangeburg case, right? Wasn't he the one and what's the name of that case? I'm sorry. Bowen Turner. Bowen Turner, you heard about Bentley Price.. But you never hear anything about Daniel Hall, because Daniel Hall is just a hard working diligent judge. You know, we have..he's the..

Liz Farrell 21:37

Beach to say who he is. He's the judge on the Beach family case.

Eric Bland 21:42

Yeah. Nobody has raised one single issue about him. And he's been in the, you know, the bramble bush in that case, that's a very sticky, thorny case. And there's other judges that we have, you know, Judge Vard, and



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in Greenville, all these different judges, you don't hear about him because they're doing their job. And they kind of stay in the middle of the road. So I want to be careful that we're not painting a broad brush, but you raise legitimate issues about some judges, and some lawyer legislators. Absolutely. It needs to be raised. But we don't have a systematic problem with judges but we have to watch it. And with that, we will be right back.

Liz Farrell 22:38

Okay so on True Sunlight. We told our listeners about a lawyer on Hilton Head named Peter J. Strauss, who is somebody that is sort of was loosely connected to this sort of Murdaugh world in the sense that we knew that his friend Dennis growing was sort of briefly represented by Cory Fleming before Dennis killed himself in you know, after in the aftermath of these two Hilton Head Islanders, Liz and John Calvert, who went missing, and were declared dead. Money had been looked like embezzled from the Calverts by Dennis growing, and that is sort of how this mystery ended. And it's a mystery that to this day, it still has a lot of people scratching their heads, there's still a lot of theories, what have you. So Cory Fleming's entrance on the scene back then was seen as why why? Why would Dennis hire Cory? That it just immediately seemed like, okay, something's up here. Even before we knew about all the Murdaugh stuff, because Cory was a Beaufort attorney, and because of his close ties to the 14th circuit, so that said, we told our listeners about how the Feds from what our sources were telling us we're looking at Peter J. Strauss as somebody who might hold answers as to where Alex had stashed the stolen money. Peter is a lawyer who is known as being particularly adept at captive insurance policies, offshore policies and sort of the management of



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Eric Bland 24:12

Tax shelters.

Liz Farrell 24:15

Tax shelters. That's yeah, that's a nice way to say it. So all Peter, we told people, it looked like he was going to get indicted because he got suspended by the bar or the Supreme Court. We had no answers. And we were just wondering what's going on here? Had he been indicted, and those indictments were sealed and what did we find out on Friday Mandy?

Mandy Matney 24:39

They were sealed all along. He was charged in October and October like a long time ago. And again, the bar didn't suspend him until December. Yeah.

Eric Bland 24:56

And that gives him two months to clean up his stuff, right?

Mandy Matney 25:03

And he's still practicing, able to practice like, shouldn't the barkeep be concerned about being wrecked?

Liz Farrell 25:07

Well, so where this comes from so he is he has pleaded guilty to helping this couple out of California who both are serving federal time like a long sentences, one of them has like 11 years, this couple was accused of basically running this billion dollar fraud involving these solar lights that you use at like big scale events. And they weren't even building the



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lights in some cases. And what they did instead is they created all these little shell companies to shelter the investment money that they had. So when they knew that the feds were on them in 2018, it appears that they turned to one of their lawyers, Peter J. Strauss to help shelter that money. And so what he pleaded guilty to is the removal of property to prevent seizure. And there's a I think it was \$11 million. That was that question that he helped, quote unquote, shelter, but he has pleaded guilty to \$3 million of that to sheltering \$3 million. He didn't plead guilty. Right away. Now, let's go back in time, guys,

Eric Bland 26:10

What does that tell you? What does that sound like?

Liz Farrell 26:12

Do you remember? Where in the world is Cory Fleming? Do you remember that episode, where we didn't know where Cory was? He was off the grid. He was somewhere and a friend of mine, not in the system. A friend of mine who was familiar with these things told me you only see that when they are turning state's evidence because they want to protect where they are. So no one can get to them. And they will provide them a little safe haven to be able to spill the beans, right. So with Peter Strauss, there was a motion to seal all his documents for three months, we didn't even know when they were sealed. Like we could search, we knew to search on Pacer for him. And Beth Braden was searching every day to see if this guy was going to pop up in the federal database for indictments. And he didn't pop up until they unsealed the indictment and allowed him to plead guilty to it. It's only a miss not a misdemeanor, but it's only five years a maximum of five year sentence that carries with this that is carried with this charge of



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pleading guilty to remove the removal of property to prevent seizure. But what was Peter doing in the time? Why did they do this? Emily Limehouse is the prosecutor. Can we just talk about that for a second? What do you know Emily Limehouse for doing? Who she'd been working with? She's on the Cory Fleming case. She's on the Murdaugh stuff. So I know that she's I know that she does other things. I'm not trying to make that correlation. A solid one. But one other thing I wanted to point out about Peter J. Strauss that I thought was interesting is his attorney is Joe Griffith out of Mount Pleasant, a criminal lawyer, you know him. good criminal lawyer. Okay. Because I looked through newspapers.com Like looking for this guy's history. His website is a picture of a bulldog or a pug or something. And a 404 b error. So I don't know what's going on there. I know. He's an older gentleman. He graduated, you passed the bar in 1982. But the only thing that could see him was he wrapped one of the defendants in the Santee Cooper case. He wrapped a woman who was accused of being part of this \$13 million fraud a couple years back. And then in 2009, he went up against Henry McMaster when Henry McMaster was the attorney general. And Joe Griffith represented Craigslist because Henry McMaster was going after prostitutes on Craigslist. So those are the only mentions I could really find for him. So I just thought that it was very interesting that this attorney was somebody that we surprisingly hadn't heard of. I've never heard of them. But you have Eric.

Mandy Matney 28:50

I just have a question. How are they able to seal charges like in the federal system? I feel like they do that a lot more. What's the reasoning to be able to just keep charges away from the public for that long?



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Eric Bland 29:09

So because there's obviously cooperation being done by probably Strauss and others and they don't want to scare off, you know, they may have wiretaps out, they may have different things going on undercover investigations to snare other people. You know, he pled guilty to very relatively light charges compared to what we've heard, his conduct has been. So it is a turning on his clients who are going to get hit with income tax fraud and different types of conspiracy charges, money laundering charges. You know, there's obviously a network of lawyers that funnel people to Strauss for these things because he has relationships now we see not just in South Carolina, but the Transcend in the entire country, you know, these are very aggressive structuring transactions where you essentially shelter all of your earned income. And it's deposited over in the islands, and how do you get your money back? And, you know, there are loopholes, but there are loopholes that haven't been tested. And, you know, justice is not perfect. It's not pretty, it's not easy and what the federal government wants, the judicial system is finality. And so, Emily's going to be able to say, I got four or five trophies, I got Peter Strauss, I got this person, this person, this person, it's not to the extent that they want, it's not as much as they should get, you know, a normal person like us that we can't train information, or we don't have information, we're gonna get hit with 10 years, 15 years, 20 years. But, you know, the more that you can broker and sell information, the better it is, and it is a number it is a statistic that Emily can point to. Look I got these convictions and in this scheme, so it's not perfect. It doesn't make us happy. But it is justice.



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Liz Farrell 31:14

Eric, do you talk a little bit about attorneys turning on their clients like that? How often does that seem like a rare thing or what?

Eric Bland 31:25

It is a rare thing, except if they are pure if they transcend being a counselor and an attorney, and they're part of the scheme. You know, obviously, he's no longer an attorney anymore. So the attorney client privilege is gone. And if an attorney can't suborn perjury if they know their client is committing a crime and an attorney can assist the client committing a crime, they have to stop if they can prevent a crime from occurring, either by recusing themselves or trying not to be part of the transaction. But it does sound like that. Strauss was in a smoke filled room doing this with his clients and part of the conspiracy. It is rare that attorneys turn on their clients, but it does happen.

Liz Farrell 32:12

And you're saying that when he's suspended by the bar right now. And he's obviously going to be disbarred because he's pleading guilty to a felony. Yeah. Right. But you're saying that once that ends once he's no longer a lawyer, that makes it okay for him to tell what went on in the relationship with his clients.

Eric Bland 32:29

Not necessarily not necessarily, it's going to be challenged because the attorney client privilege belongs to the client, the client holds the privilege, the client can waive the privilege. And the client is going to say, Look, I told my lawyer these things in a confidential setting, and he can't go out and use those to benefit himself. The problem is when the



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lawyer is part of that conspiracy, and committing fraud, the attorney client privilege can be pierced, and it's called the fraud exception to the attorney client privilege. So a drug client or a criminal can't prevent an attorney from talking or the government from finding out those communications if they're part of fraud. So that's called the fraud crime exception.

Mandy Matney 33:20

And well, and then something else I noticed it looks like his attorney, his attorney, for sure filed a motion that he could go to Mexico with his wife in January, and I think they approved it. But like I said, some of the documents were sealed. Some of them weren't but like, Playa Del Carmen, Mexico, he wanted to go for a second anniversary with his wife, they made it very clear about that. And I was surprised they even asked for it after you're on bond with the federal government. And you obviously have the means motive in everything to run. If you're a guy like Peter Strauss...

Eric Bland 34:02

Your money could be outside of our country already.

Liz Farrell 34:07

Outside the country.

Eric Bland 34:08

The gonads on that guy.



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Liz Farrell 34:11

Gonads? Or is it somebody who knows that they're in? They're well positioned to ask for that? Do you know what I'm saying? So, yes, this is why we think that Peter Straus is sitting on something big because you have all this little evidence, you know, this sort of correlated correlation of evidence happening right now with like, the documents were sealed for a while and this man thought nothing of asking. I don't think that's just his arrogance. I think that when you have good stuff to give you say, Guess what I'm doing this year? Going on my second anniversary trip, he is barred from spending more than \$50,000 in any single transaction without talking to his probation officer. So that's huge for him because this is a man who had private planes.

Eric Bland 34:59

That's a whole lot of money you have to make 5000 \$5,000.

Liz Farrell 35:01

So that's like \$50,000.

Eric Bland 35:05

When was the last time you guys spent \$50,000? Almost last term we spent \$50,000 on

Liz Farrell 35:12

Never Yeah, that's what I mean, never. Yeah.

Mandy Matney 35:17

But yeah, that but he was doing it left and right. That's like a cheeseburger for her.



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Liz Farrell 35:22

I don't know. Did you guys ever see this? I think Forbes did this report years ago. But it was like taking the vote like Reese Witherspoon is worth, you know, \$200 million, or something, say to her buying a \$250,000 house would be like, for me going to buy a value meal at McDonald's. Like when you look relatively scary. Yes. Like when you take somebody's wealth and you look at the things that they're able to regard and the same way you do, like a gallon of milk or, you know, going to a nice grocery store instead of the regular grocery store. Like it's, it's amazing when you see like the things that they're able to buy with just add a second thought so \$50,000 to Peter Straus, according to his divorce papers, by the way, his divorce, this man has a messy, messy divorce and there's a transcript out there does with affidavit.

Eric Bland 36:14

She is suing him civilly not only in family court, but civilly.

Liz Farrell 36:18

That's right. She is I mean, she's married to a well known Hilton Head attorney as well now so she remarried and had a little girl, I think, together. So she's got the kids from Peter Straus. And then she's got a kid from this new lawyer. And I think this new lawyer knows what's up. And, you know, he told her what the keys to the kingdom look like, and how to get to Peter Strauss. But, thankfully, because now we get to see what all this guy had been doing. Hopefully, she pretty much laid it out there. Yeah, hopefully. So the money that he has is offshore. And that's the issue is he structured his own money in a way that she can't get to? So that's pretty, right.



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Mandy Matney 37:04

And she has four of his children. And he's like, you don't get a dime, pretty much. And because that's my money, and it's over there, and you don't get any of it. And she's like, well, I've raised your four children. And I'm still raising nothing.

Liz Farrell 37:23

He was nothing when they got married, by the way, like he, no one knew who this guy was. He showed up on the scene. And suddenly he's involved in the Calvert case, insofar as he is one of the guys who found Dennis Carvings body when they couldn't get in touch with him. So he went from nothing to something real quick.

Mandy Matney 37:40

And he built a \$10 million building on Hilton Head called The Campus. Eric, people, everybody describes it, it's creepy. Who's been there? I don't I've never been there. But it's been on the market for a while now. And I want to say in the divorce papers, he hadn't paid for hardly any of it. Did you see that list? I did.

Liz Farrell 38:03

Yeah. And then didn't quite understand the significance of that. I didn't know what that meant.

Mandy Matney 38:07

He owed a ton of money on it. And now it started 10 million a couple you put it on the market for 10 million. And now it's already at eight, I guess 8.9 It's a bargain.



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Eric Bland 38:21

Every time you guys say Peter Strauss I think of the first soap opera the nightly before Dallas in the 70's. It was called Rich Man, poor man. And you're probably both too young for But Peter Strauss was on it. Nick Nolte made his name on it. And it was one of the best kinds of nightly soaps. It was before Dallas and all Knott's landing and all that stuff. And Peter Strauss was there, and he was a really good actor. And so that's what I always think about when you say Peter Strauss. It's hilarious just for the older listeners. I'm sure some of our older listeners remember rich man, poor man.

Liz Farrell 38:57

I never even heard of that. But it's a fitting show for somebody named Peter Strauss to be in.

Eric Bland 39:05

Sure.

Liz Farrell 39:06

Because I don't know what's going to happen to him. But I will say, I'm just really I hope, I hope, I hope it is what we think it is, and that this man has some really good information for the Feds whether or not it's related to the Murdaugh case. But it would be nice, obviously to.

Eric Bland 39:24

Well, I was waiting for you to say that I was waiting for you to tie it back. So you think there could be a tie?



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Liz Farrell 39:28

Or there could be I mean, what are the odds that you have a lawyer in the low country in the 14th circuit in particular, who is stealing massive amounts of money from his clients, and then it's untraceable. It gets converted to cash. And then all we hear is that, you know, he takes little trips on private planes to the Caribbean. And you've got this other lawyer who, you know the loose connection of the Cory Fleming aspect of it, where Cory Fleming gets that phone call no grant Did like I said earlier, he had great ties to the 14th circuit. We know that he and Alex thought that they could just get anyone out of anything based on Murdaugh to badges that he could flash. So I don't know. I mean, you just see those two things. And then you hear behind the scenes that we're on the right track, that our thinking is lining up with what is happening in the investigation. So what else are we to think, Eric?

Eric Bland 40:25

I hear you, I hear it's exciting stuff, you know that? You know, I think we're just still scratching the surface, believe it or not, I think that, you know, it may take a couple years, but we're still scratching the surface, it's going to take Tory sitting in a jail cell, it's going to take Russell sitting in a jail cell it's going to take, I don't think Murdaugh is ever going to give it up really, you know, until it gets out of the, you know, one way or the other. The murder conviction is either settled, or he gets a new trial. But I think we haven't heard the end of it. And it's not confined to just Cory, Murdaugh, and Russell, there's just no way it's confined to those three.



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Liz Farrell 41:06

Maybe you have a source that we talked to you two years ago, just over two years ago, and I have a ton of notes from that conversation. And I was looking over the notes. And there's so much that we need to go back and look at when it comes to the Murdaugh stuff. But one thing in particular that stuck out to me is that what Eric just said is what's literally in those notes that this is just the we're just scratching the surface, but we'll be right back.

Eric Bland 41:40

So, you know, over the past couple of weeks, you know, Will's been taking potshots at me, FITS News has and you know, I sometimes I let it go, sometimes I know, I take the bait, and I respond, and I probably shouldn't, because it just gives him you know, more of a platform. He made some comments about me during the motion for a new trial hearing, but lo and behold, last week, you know, the cat's come home to roost. You know, Karma is a nasty thing sometimes. And, you know, we found out that there was a lawsuit that Mark Tinsley filed against FITS News and Will Folks in connection with somebody who was accused of being a suspect in the Stephen Smith murder. And evidently FITS News published a photograph of I think his name is Austin Stanley.

Liz Farrell 42:32

Published it in April, and then again in October, and they were notified immediately.

Eric Bland 42:35

By the mother of this wrongfully accused suspect. Hey, that's not true. Certainly SLED has never come out and said that they have a suspect.



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The only thing that I've ever learned is that there are six, five to six people that may have information that's relevant to how Stephen Smith died, which is a far cry from calling somebody a suspect. And from my understanding, according to the lawsuit, Will Folks acknowledged it. Acknowledged that he shouldn't have published that photograph, and promised to rectify it, take it down, take it off of all the mediums that it appeared on. But then again, somehow in October, lo and behold, it was published again by FITS News, went on YouTube. And Mark Tinsley was retained and that is the wrong guy to have on the other side of you. And Will Folks knows it's serious. He was quiet for a couple of days and then gave a midnight apology. But it was more of a well I'm going to take accountability because nobody else in life takes accountability, which is completely false. And he is not taking accountability. And it's an extremely serious lawsuit. You're talking about a per se, which means that when you accuse somebody of defamation, if it's accusing them of a crime, a loathsome disease, you impugn their profession, or you accuse somebody of unchaste you don't have to prove damages. And you know, now this guy has been walking the street and people look at him and, you know, a lie travels around the world before truth can lace up shoes, and so nobody's going to realize the retractions bring it and this could be the death sentence for FITS News.

Mandy Matney 44:21

That first of all, obviously, Liz and I are former employees of that news outlet and so we should probably say that lots of personal drama, not even drama, just how would you even call it was psychological warfare.



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Liz Farrell 44:36

I guess it's I you know, what bothers me Mandy is when I see people online being like, oh, both sides, you both are, you know, doing it to each other. And it's like, our decision from the beginning after we left FITS News was to not acknowledge FITS News, and a lot of that is just because like you said, Eric, you know, there's a fuel that happens. There's a certain maybe personality type or a certain and sort of like, I guess, if you want to call it like a situation where you don't want to give too much oxygen to it, there's enough like, our thing is that it's a rising tide lifts all ships, the Murdaugh story needs to be told from all different perspectives, we're not in the breaking news business, we are here to explain and go deeper, we all have our little areas of the story. And so it just didn't seem like it was the professional thing to do. Or personally, you know, without getting into too much of just my personal opinion of this person. And that organization, I just didn't want, I want to move on, I don't want that attached to me anymore. It was not a good experience for me. And it has taken a lot in my life to get past that experience. So unfortunately, though, we are confronted time and again, with things that we have to comment on. And typically Mandy, and I don't, but the one thing we did, or the I did anyway, is related to the sort of unmasking of who is behind these Reddit pages, and they, you know, sort of troll this effort, I guess, to like, I don't know what their goal is to make us jump off bridges, or whatever we want to call it, to find out that one of them God forbid, and there's one employee of FITS News, who appears to have been some way behind it. I don't know the extent of that. So for me, I did acknowledge that on Twitter, but what Mandy's saying is that it's not in our interest to talk about this person, or if it's news because of the oxygen it gives. And the sort of, I guess, energy



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that this person is he gets energy off of that. And we don't want that. That's not what we're looking for.

Mandy Matney 46:41

But I mean, it is something I know that a lot of our audience I mentioned and on True Sunlight last week said, I would like to know from our people if they want to hear about it or not. And every response was like, Oh, my gosh, please talk about it. Because I don't know what's going on. I'm confused. And a lot of other people said, I'm interested in whatever Mark Tinsley does.

Eric Bland 47:03

So well, I tweeted out that I, I didn't think it would have happened if you guys were still there. So obviously, it's a small organization that may not have enough oversight. And I'm merely speculating, I'm not saying they don't have editorial oversight. I'm not, I'm not inside their editorial room. But you know, I know how important your integrity is. And before you publish, or before you say something, or before you let me say something, you guys want to vet it out, and you want to confirm it. And you know, that is the problem when you're trying to always break the story. And you're always trying to be first, you know, first can mean good things. But it can also mean being sloppy. And you don't, you can't afford to be sloppy in journalism, you because you're defaming people, you're wrecking lives. I mean, this isn't talking about somebody, you know, in an innocuous context, you're talking about somebody who possibly committed a murder. And, you know, it's an allegation that can follow you for a long time. And, you know, I'm just asking you a question and I'm not asking you to, to answer. But I guess in organizations before you publish stuff like this, there's a roundtable, you take it to your editor.



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I know I read it in your book, Mandy, about what you had to go through with your editors. Before you could publish something about the Murdaugh case. Is it just first in time first in line? Is that what we're seeing here?

Mandy Matney 48:40

So I think this this lawsuit also represents just how wild and crazy the behind the scenes have gotten in the media world surrounding the Murdaugh case and how vicious people have become trying to be first and trying to get the best scoop and trying to beat us quote, unquote, I don't when I looked at the timeline, for last week's episode of True Sunlight, it was not lost on me at all, Eric, that first of all, as soon as you were started representing Sandy Smith is when we'll started taking big shots at us at all three of us that drove him crazy that he was not going to be in the know of that case. And the weekend of the exhumation was when he came out with that big story in April. That named two suspects that SLED has said that they have not named and it was all weekend long. It was this whole thing that was like what's going on and Stephen Smith, why are you guys talking about this? These two suspects and we're like our sources aren't saying two suspects so I don't know what's going on over there. But I also know this man and I know that he gets very short sighted when he's angry and short sighted when he thinks that he is going to be beaten at something. And I just wonder if the competitive edge is what ultimately made them incredibly sloppy. And incredibly, everything that I've seen from every lawyer online commenting on this, it's a very clear cut defamation case. And I also know from my own defamation case, which was complete crap that I got out of it, really. And I had to pay a ton of money to get out of the defamation case, I have to say that like that was...

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Eric Bland 50:38

Not paying to the plaintiff that sued you. Just your lawyer. Be careful about that. Yes. Be careful. You didn't pay money.

Mandy Matney 50:47

Sorry. Yeah, I paid money for my lawyer to represent me and write lots of motions saying this is ridiculous. Mandy doesn't need to be here. She has nothing to do with us. She did nothing wrong. But I just got a \$400 bill from my attorney last month. And I've been out of this thing for like, I keep getting billed, because I'm not officially out. And anyways, it's really, really annoying. And for a person like me, who does not and I will not accept favors from other attorneys. Like, I believe it's the right thing to do to pay for work for people, I'm not going to have an attorney represent me and then me owe them a favor somewhere along the line. I think it's the right thing to do and to enter the justice system like everybody else and not accept favors. But will is not acting like he's having to take the justice system head on. And the way that I felt like I had to in the way that he's not acting like a he has a financial burden in covering and hiring attorneys. And I'm not sure if he's still getting friends to represent them for free. But that is not right. That doesn't sit well with me. And I think it's another representation of a look. When you're somebody like Will Folks with lots of strings to pull in the system. It's not that bad when you're, it's not nearly as bad when you are accused of defamation and ensued with defamation charges versus everybody else.

Eric Bland 52:29

Let me just clear this up right now. Swapping out services never works. Your lawyer will say okay, I'll represent you. And then you do this for me.



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Maybe you give me a couple ads or whatever in the media context, or you just do this for me and you'll clean my teeth. If it's a dentist, a lawyer doesn't want to work for free for long. Let me just tell you, it works. If it's a letter, you write a letter and it's over with. But litigation is a completely different story. It's like it may taste good go on down. But once it's in your stomach, it starts to burp and gets you know, gassy and all and you start to say, every time you're going to a court hearing, I'm not getting paid. It's almost like Abraham Lincoln said, you know, a lawyer that represents himself has a fool for a client. If you are not paying a lawyer, I promise you, you're not getting the best representation that you can get. It just is the reality of the situation unless it can end quickly. And this doesn't seem like it's going to end quickly. Because Mark Tinsley doesn't like settling a case for a burger, fries and a Coke, it's going to take a lot of money. And to get a lot of money takes time. And the lawyer that may be representing Will Folks for free if he doesn't have insurance, defamation, libel, libel insurance, and it's just a friend or a colleague that's representing them. When you're up against somebody like Mark Tinsley, who's barraging, you every day with discovery and sending out subpoenas and then wanting to do depositions, and you're sitting in a six hour deposition with somebody like Mark Tinsley across the table, you start to scratch your head and say, Damn, I should never done this deal. I did a deal with the devil.

Liz Farrell 54:17

Oh, gosh.

Mandy Matney 54:18

I don't work for free. Like I don't expect other people to work for free. And that's how we should all like it: transactions get extremely messy.



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And of course, writing a letter for a friend is totally different than like you said having to show gaming lit Yeah, and this is going to be this is going to require major litigation like Mark goes for the throat and he's not going to stop so I'm really, really interested to see how this plays out and it's a good thing because we cannot be fast and loose with the facts as journalist if you're a going to accuse a name If somebody's being named as a suspect, that's a huge, huge thing. And then on top of that, to use a photo that you aren't 1,000,000% positive that that's the person and that that person is a suspect. That is it. That's extremely egregious. And I those types, that's not an honest, honest mistake, especially when it happens twice.

Eric Bland 55:27

How many stories are in your guy's quivers that you have not released? Because you just didn't feel there was still an inkling cyst, a nagging suspicion? I don't know about this. And they were good stories. They were juicy Matilda stories.

Liz Farrell 55:45

I'll take that one from you, Eric, because right after we left FITS News, there was a story, one of many that we did and I think this was philosophically an issue that we just didn't jive with Will on. Because Mandy and I are journalists, we're trained to be cautious. We're trained to be right, we're trained, you know, nothing is more important than being best in my opinion. First is not, you know, obviously, oh, it's great. I love it. But it's not, it's not your primary goal. So soon after we left...

Eric Bland 56:15

Is your primary goal being right?



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Liz Farrell 56:17

And being good at getting your message to people writing in a way that people that resonates with people that they can repeat when you hear your own writing repeated, and people are able to to succinctly say the point that you wanted to make you want to put it in a form that they're like, I get it, okay, that's why that's bad, or that's why this is good. So that's the reward, right? But when we left FITS News, there was a story, it was an egregious story, one that I don't know how you could prove is true, given that the person the story was about had not gotten a paternity test. But it was regarding the paternity of a little child who was raised to believe someone else was her father, and the owner was related to the Sandy Smith case. And the reason that we did not publish that story that became a thing that that the trolls hooked on to is it wasn't important to the case. We knew behind the scenes that SLED was aware of it, and they were checking into it to see if there was some sort of connection that this police chief was involved with, like, I don't need to be so like, I'm not being very clear with the facts here. Yeah, I'm being very obtuse, but it's just it's not worth getting into here. It's just that that's an example of a story that we did not publish. And I think that it was hard for Will to understand. And I think when he saw us holding on to information as journalists, but sharing it with the group they knew like it he published that story, he published that story. That's what I'm saying. Yeah, without us, it was not just hurtful. It was in addition, how do you know that this is the truth when you didn't call the family? But additionally, that family doesn't actually have a paternity test to turn to and say, This is who the father is. So why?



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Mandy Matney 57:54

And that family is dealing with the murder or the unsolved murder of Stephen. And it's like, I always weigh, especially when it's a case that's been unsolved for that long with the information that I put out, is it worth it for the family to go through it? You have to weigh that? And is it versus is it going to help the case? How much is it going to help the case versus how much is it going to hurt the family? And in this case, it wasn't going to help the case at all. And it was just going to do nothing but hurt the family and take the knife and twist it inside of them. And Sandy sent the messages that she sent to Will a couple of years ago when that happened. And I was overly disgusted at Will's response to Sandy and how he spoke to her saying things like you've been brainwashed by Liz and Mandy, you have no idea what you're talking about. Just Sandy, this is how he spoke with Sandy.

Liz Farrell 58:53

And he was like, not Mandy, not Liz, me. I'm the one who broke the story. And I'm the one who's been telling the story. It's like in your...

Mandy Matney 59:00

You should talk to me for all your tips. You should talk to me for all the blah blah blah. And it just showed this horrible evil competitive, it's worse than competitive. It's just evil. It's short sighted the side of him that he does not see clearly.

Liz Farrell 59:21

To be compassionate to him, yeah, exactly what you're saying. My compassionate side looks at him and says this is a man who has been blinded by his own ego. He makes up narratives in his head about his



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enemies, people that are against him who are not against him who simply want to coexist with him. I took the job with him, Mandy, because I respected the way he treated you. And I saw that and I thought that that was respectful. That was kind of professional. And I went in with a level of respect for him that I entrust that I don't know I don't know what to do with that now you know, just because of just how poorly I was treated under him and how suspiciously he treated me as if somebody's like on somebody out there who's hoarding this information. And it's like, you're, we have the story since 2019. I don't know what information I know from then I don't know what information I know, it's my head's full of information. And we're not trying to keep stories out of the headlines. We're simply trying to do the right thing for the story. And there has to be that mutual trust. So that said, I just want to say that in journalism, I was the copy desk chief for two, three newspapers. And one of the things we do, Eric, this is how serious newspapers take defamation. I had an entire staff whose job was to look at stories and photos, headlines, to look at it for libel. They were trained in libel. This was the way you prevented the newspaper from getting sued. I had a copy editor who instead of putting the winner she put the sinner on top of Lindsey Graham's photo, you know, things like that that happened that you're like, that's an honest mistake. That's a typo. She wasn't trying to say that he's a sinner. But then there's cases where we had a story about a couple that supposedly, the wife she was pregnant with quintuplets and the reporter didn't do any vetting of that he didn't speak to the doctor, he didn't verify. And the whole community came out for this couple because they were poor, and held baby showers for them and did all sorts of donating, donating of money. And it turned out it was a hoax. The woman just, you know, had a bit of a belly. You know, it wasn't. It wasn't that she was not



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carrying quintuplets. She just was a hungry individual. So that was a story in which you know, there was no, no, no one gets sued as far as I remember.

Eric Bland 1:01:52

But well, let me digress. Let me digress. So you as journalists, The New York Times Sullivan standard is the prevailing standard. So when you're writing stories about let's say, Murdaugh Mert or Decart poot Lee and or judge Carmen Molen. They are public figures. They're different from private figures. They're different from this young man, Mr. Stanley, who is not a public figure. He didn't inject himself into the public to become a public figure. He didn't run for office, he didn't go on TV. He is a private individual. So under the New York Times solvent standard, when you have a public figure, you as that person who's alleging defamation has to show that the news agency or the author, the journalist, proceeded with actual malice that they had a bone to pick it was individually motivated. I had malice that I wanted to take that person down. A private individual like Mr. Stanley doesn't have to show that heightened actual malice standard. And so all they have to show is that will folks, you know, and as it fits News didn't have the protocols to catch this. They were sloppy. They defamed me. They didn't mean to hurt me, you I don't have to show that Will meant to hurt Mr. Stanley, but he was using it in furtherance to show he was first in time first in line. And it's a much lower standard. And I gotta tell you, Mark Tinsley filed this case, in I think Hampton County, and it's in the Low Country, and somebody's going to get smoked here, and it ain't gonna be the plaintiff.



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Liz Farrell 1:03:35

I just quickly want to mention to you that Austin Stanley's name was in no way mentioned in any of the files that we've seen regarding the Stephen Smith case. So it's not even a name that was loosely or in any way associated, never heard the name before that lawsuit was filed. In fact, I mean, it wasn't until I made the association that Stanley is the name of the drinking cup I use that I couldn't even remember his name.

Eric Bland 1:04:01

So you don't get a freebie buddy. Like there used to be the dog by rule we used to have that your dog could bite somebody wants and you get a free bite. We don't even have that anymore. You don't get a free mistake in the business that you guys do. It's real life bullets. When you write a story and it's printed. There's real live bullets involved.

Mandy Matney 1:04:22

Right and the key to this case two is the boy's mother reached out herself and was extremely clear. This is a picture of my son. He has nothing to do with this. Will responded to the mother but he still didn't fix it. And he used while he...

Liz Farrell 1:04:40

Well he fixed it. It's just that in October he apparently ran it again, is what? Yeah, that's where the confusion is right.

Mandy Matney 1:04:50

But when we all make mistakes in journalism, then there are a million times the key is when you make a mistake to that extent you not only



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fail except that you do everything in your power, it changes you as a journalist and it changes something inside of you to be extra careful the next time.

Eric Bland 1:05:08

You didn't do it a million times. I disagree with that. It's not a million times.

Mandy Matney 1:05:12

I haven't done that a million times. But I've made you know, you make mistakes and...

Liz Farrell 1:05:16

Typos and calling people the wrong name or, right it's an honest mistake.

Mandy Matney 1:05:20

Those stick with me. And the next time I go to do something similar to that, I'm not going to make that mistake again. Because I was so hard on myself the last time and it destroyed me and all these things.

Eric Bland 1:05:31

Nothing to be learned from a second kick of a mule.

Liz Farrell 1:05:33

Speaking of mules I got in trouble, my second newspaper I worked out because I wrote a headline that said Heifer Homicides. It was like these cows that were getting killed in Frederick County, Maryland. And all these farmers called up the next day, and they're like, you can't have a



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homicide with a cow. Like it was I was just doing alliteration, I didn't know that homicide, like the root of homicide is manned. But yeah, that kind of thing sticks with you, you never forget that you don't. And there's systems that are put in place at the island package at the Frederick news post, the Gettysburg times all the places that I worked, we had a back end system where things were double, triple check, there was a naming convention, that wasn't just that you put these photos into the system, and you just put whatever name you want, you had to put last name, comma first name, and then afforded a six to a six digit date of when you put that photo in there, you couldn't keep photos on your desktop and use those photos to put on the page. They had to be in the centralized system to show that you were vetting it. And then when you print it out the page, just show okay, this is what what's gonna go on the paper the next day, you had one and two more people looking at it to verify that this little mug shot this tiny little picture on the page of this murder suspect was actually the person that was in the jail log, but is the same photo. And many times newspapers will opt not even to use that photo because of what could happen there. So if a case like that had walked in the door, that island packet, I would be packing up my desk waiting for my boss to call me and that is how bad that that is, is to take somebody whose reputation is now publicly only associated with a picture of somebody who's being called a murder suspect with no cited sources. That's what I'll also add there. So did not expect to talk about that to the extent that we did.

Mandy Matney 1:07:20

Karma is our boyfriend. And it's coming. I mean, I think back to, I had a mistake one time when I was a and I'm also glad that Liz, Liz and I were both trained in newspapers. I feel like when you're trained in



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newspapers because of the finality of having a printed edition every day, you are just more careful about it. Then you're careful. You're more careful about everything versus online where everything's fluid and you can change it loosey goosey whatever. That training just sticks with you and I one time long story short, there was a high school club called the Lakeway Hornets club. And I accidentally printed in the newspaper The Lakeway Horny Club.

Liz Farrell 1:08:18

I saw where that was going before you even sent it.

Mandy Matney 1:08:22

Like she was and this was conservative Missouri. So parents called me that entire day. Like I was the shame girl of the town. They were like, how do you say this about the children? Do you think this is funny? It was an entire day of phone calls like that.

Liz Farrell 1:08:39

And that's awful.

Mandy Matney 1:08:43

I was 20. It was a typo. It was a legitimate mistake. And I felt so bad. That was like one of my worst days of work.

Liz Farrell 1:08:55

I did a newsroom in the community. You just don't let it go. You just never let it go.



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Mandy Matney 1:09:01

Every time my phone rang pretty good from that point on like any newspaper. I always just assumed I was gonna get yelled at from that day. And but you make those mistakes and you realize that like you take it on the chin and you realize that you messed up and you figure out how to not do it again. And he didn't do that. He's never done that. I don't think.

Liz Farrell 1:09:23

And that's the other thing, Eric. There is I don't know if you guys have been in the legal world but we have this sort of it's like a bad it's bad luck to talk about somebody else's mistake in any way that's not serious. So if somebody else made a mistake, like Mandy just said in the newsroom, you have a laugh out at him or ridicule. You have to be careful because karma is coming for you. So the second you make fun of another journalist's mistake in a way that goes beyond just you know, we have one of my favorite co workers at the Island Packet Drew Martin ran. It's too funny. It was of a turtle, a sea turtle that was sick and had been brought to the Turtle Hospital. And there's a technique...

Eric Bland 1:10:07

What there's not a separate Turtle Hospital. They don't have squirrel squirrel hospitals.

Liz Farrell 1:10:20

It's the Turtle Hospital.



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Mandy Matney 1:10:21

Coastal South Carolina takes its turtles like so seriously, Eric, I have no idea. So many laws.

Liz Farrell 1:10:29

There's a turtle rehab.

Eric Bland 1:10:30

They love their turtles. They have a rehab center turtle rehab.

Liz Farrell 1:10:35

Absolutely, they gotta get back in the water. So this turtle I guess had been cold stunned, this turtle had been cold stung like the weather changes. I don't know enough about what cold does. But Drew thought it was cold. He thought the name of the turtle was Cold Stew. And so the caption of the cutline for the photo, he identified the photo as Cold Stew. I've never laughed so hard in my life. And I knew it and I know I Drew. That was funny too. But it's not funny and for him because this you know, obviously I mean, it's just harmless. Right? No turtle is gonna sue you for calling it cold stew. Yeah, it's just you take it, we take it very seriously. And this is the last thing I want to say about this is that Will is an incredibly smart person. His talent is in reporting on Statehouse news. I have a friend of mine who even said it like this is where he shines. He has the inside story. He knows how this stuff works. He could be the voice for the state on those issues. He's often covering things that no one else covers. It's just when he starts to be, like Mandy said, he becomes very short sighted. When it comes to these perceived, you know, enemy enemy situations are these. Yeah, competitions, these perceived competitions, when it's like the other you got to look across



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the room and see that the other people don't consider you competition. So you're not going ahead. Like we can applaud you breaking the news. But you gotta be accurate, you've got to be right about it. And you have to, it has to come from a genuine place of wanting to share that news not because there's some arrangement or some sort of like we don't want to be questioning why is the story being written? What is this person's objective? Is he using his platform to exact revenge on people? Or is this actually true out as hard journalism to inform the public so I'm doing a public service at that. So that's all I'll say yes to is too good for this mud fight that he keeps not enjoying apparently.

Mandy Matney 1:12:38

Yeah it's just it's pathetic and sad.

Eric Bland 1:12:41

So last week, you know, without any announcement, the special referee Will Tolleson, who was appointed by Judge Daniel Hall, in the receivership aspect of the Mallory Beach case, gave his ruling on the monies that were left from what the receiver collected from Murdaugh's assets over the last year and a half, and there's been some attorneys fees paid to the receivers and their law firms. And there was about \$1.7 million left. And in October, all the victims of Murdaugh, Murdaugh's theft and former clients had the opportunity to petition and file to receive a portion of those monies. And not a lot of victims filed. I think there were about seven or maybe even less than six. And obviously we filed on behalf of the Satterfields because the Satterfields had an existing judgment against Murdaugh, for \$4.3 million, which, coincidentally, Bentley Price affirmed when Murdaugh tried to vacate and attack that judgment. They then tried to appeal that decision from



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Judge Price, and they decided to withdraw. So this judgment is good for 10 years. So we filed on behalf of the Satterfield's. We filed on behalf of the Plyler sisters because they had money stolen from them that was ultimately repaid from stolen fronts from others but they lost the interest in use of those funds for a period of time. And so we thought we would recover some money on behalf of our clients. We knew that the lion's share would go to Murdaugh's tort victims, meaning those boat victims, the Beaches and Morgan Dowdy and others we thought that it would be pro rata and equitably divided. Remember this special referee sits in equity. There. A judge or a special referee there sits in law or sits in equity. If he or she sits in law, it can be a very one sided ruling meaning they have to follow the statutes they have to follow the regulations they have to follow the case law and it makes winners and losers. But when you sit in equity, it's just a synonym for being fair. Fairness. How can we be fair to everybody? And surprisingly, when the order came out, the special referee gave \$0 to the Satterfield's, gave \$0 to the Plyler sisters, 29% to the Beaches and 24% to Arthur Badger. PMPED got 15%, even Johnny Parker of all people, the person who was in the best position to have stopped or discovered Murdaugh's fraud that was ongoing for 15 years or so. He even got a percentage. And so it was very surprising because prior to this happening, we had a mediation when there were fairness figures being discussed by all parties. And I can't get into the details. But I can safely say that the Satterfield's weren't being discussed, like they were going to get nothing or the Plyler sisters were not going to get nothing. So we were very surprised. I've come out very strong against it. I think it's a travesty of justice. I think every single victim of Murdaugh needs to get some money from him. Whether it's \$10 or \$100, or \$50,000, or something, something that they can go on with their life that they recovered for



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him. You know, Murdaugh from the Satterfield standpoint shouldn't walk away with \$3.5 million that he stole from there \$4.3 million, simply because we sued a whole bunch of other law firms, banks, Cory Fleming, and Chad Westendorf and recovered over seven and a half million dollars. He shouldn't get to walk away like that. And so we filed a motion to reconsider on Friday, and I'm hopeful that he will be thoughtful and recognize that that is not a way to get people justice. Not a way to be fair, and not a way for people to be able to heal. So report on that as soon as we hear.

Liz Farrell 1:17:08

Well, what's their reason for not giving you money?

Eric Bland 1:17:11

We recovered too much. He picked winners and losers. He said, I felt like you've recovered enough for the Satterfield, you've recovered enough for the Plylers look, Mallory Beach, I believe she should get \$100 million. The family if it's available, there's no amount of money that you could give the beach family to replace Mallory. But Mark Tinsley has been very successful so far on their behalf. I think he's recovered more than \$20 million. So he should get more. He should get the lion's share for them from this money. But the Satterfield who lost their mother, who Murdaugh abused. She was 22 years a housekeeper in that family, the Pilar sisters who lost their mother and brother, they should get something and then it would be fair, that's all we're asking for is fairness.



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Mandy Matney 1:18:00

I think they just need I mean, the main part of that that made me angry was Johnny getting money.

Eric Bland 1:18:07

And the group the Satterfield is in the Plylers with Randy...

Liz Farrell 1:18:13

Johnny got 15% and PMPED got 14%. And my problem with Johnny getting any money is that it's a personal loan. It's not you know Alex didn't steal from him. Johnny made a bad bet on Alec and when you make a bad bet many bad bets tell me that the casinos giving you your money back.

Eric Bland 1:18:35

Then he tried to jump in line. He tried to jump first in line twice.

Mandy Matney 1:18:41

And he was like, like the bank like wrestler feet like he was on the front lines of being able to realize that hot something's going on here. Like, Murdaugh is getting paid this much with a law firm. Why does he always come to me for \$500,000? What's going on there? And again, it's a bad bet that is completely different from being taken advantage of by your attorney, when you have nothing and you need everything like that's never sat well with me that PMPED wants to call itself a victim. And again, the audacity of these guys really want to stand in the same line. And they want to call themselves attorneys and they want to call them smart and brilliant, and successful. But at the same time, they let all this happen and they let themselves be victimized, quote unquote.



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Liz Farrell 1:19:29

So the only thing they want to call themselves is rich Mandy, that's it. That's the only thing those guys want is to be rich. And I'm going to tell you, it is disgusting to me that the only reason this money exists in the first place is because of Mark Tinsley. He had the forethought and the foresight to look at the situation and say, I think Murdaugh has been wasting assets and his family is helping him do it. We need to freeze the assets we need because I have this lawsuit coming up. I want to make sure that this idiot here isn't doing what I think he's doing. So it was sort of unprecedented right Eric at the time.

Eric Bland 1:20:02

Yeah I do give Mark, I do give Mark some credit for it. John T Lai called me on the phone and said, Hey, I think you and Mark should apply for receivership. And I would be willing to do it because he was participating in a receivership that was being run by Justice Toal for the asbestos victims. Peter Papas was the who was actually a mediator in this case. For the special referee in the receivership to dole out the money, we had a mediation. He was one of the mediators But Peter Papas is a receivership for the asbestos funds, which Justice Toal is presiding over. And John Lay is one of the attorneys involved representing the parties. And he said, You all should do the same thing for Murdaugh. And so that's how it came about. It was a combination of Mark and John Lay and me.

Liz Farrell 1:20:57

Is there any chance Johnny is gonna knock any money? I mean, like, is there any chance?



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Eric Bland 1:21:01

Well, you raise a good point, I mean, he chose to loan money to a scallywag. You know, my clients and everybody else chose not to be victimized. Nobody stepped to the line and said, hey, hey, steal money from me, you know, steal my, you know, from me as a result of a family member dying. Nobody chose to do that. So we're hopeful we'll get an argument and we'll hope we get justice. Love that. Yeah. Because if not, I'm gonna let the world know that I think, you know, Wall Tolleson did a really poor job.

Mandy Matney 1:21:35

All right. And with that said, cups down everyone.

Eric Bland 1:21:38

Cups down.

Liz Farrell 1:21:40

Cups down.

Mandy Matney 1:21:46

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