



EPISODE 69: Inspiring Women in the Justice System: Crossover Episode with Attorney Sarah A. Ford and Pesky P.I. Mackenzie Fultz

Mandy Matney 00:07

Hello, and Happy Tuesday. Once again, we are shaking things up on Cup of Justice because sometimes change is a good thing, right? We want to use this platform to amplify other inspiring voices of the justice system, especially strong women, because frankly, we don't hear enough from that perspective of the justice system. So today, I am proud to present this episode that contains two different interviews from two completely different inspiring women. In the first half, you'll hear from attorney Sarah Ford, who joined me and Columbia, South Carolina last week for a members only event called Capital City Confidential, where we talked about the good, the bad and the ugly of the justice system, especially when it comes to victims. I got to know Sarah as she was the attorney representing the victims in the Bowen Turner case, and I so appreciate her passion to fix the justice system and to use her talent for good. Sarah also has an awesome podcast called Stepping Towards Justice, which you can listen to wherever you get your pods, or click the link in the description. And then we are changing things up with a fun conversation with the hilarious and incredibly talented former private investigator. Now TikTok famous, Mackenzie Fultz. Mackenzie came across my feed in December when I saw this absolutely bananas video of her telling a story about when she was a PI hired by a woman to find the father of her child so she could serve him child support papers. Well, Mackenzie found the guy and a whole lot more. I want to play you this clip of her telling the story, mind you while she's doing her makeup, because wow.

Mackenzie Fultz 01:55

So then he spills the beans, I think I'm really good at this job. Well, he says it's really none of his business what's going on. But he could clearly



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tell that this guy has like a harem. And he remembered seeing not one, not two, not three, but four women that were pregnant coming in and out of the building with my guy. So this guy has multiple women at different stages of pregnancy just living.

Mandy Matney 02:20

Now Mackenzie is so funny, and also really great at telling stories, but I wanted to interview her about her investigative skills, which really stuck out to me as I was watching her videos. She also has a podcast called Dating Detectives, you all should check out wherever you get your podcast or in the link in the description. Both Mackenzie and Sarah inspire me in different ways. They both went for careers that I honestly wish I pursued when I was younger. But I didn't have the confidence to. If I've realized anything and the last few years it is that we need more women in the justice system. We need more women in the courtroom fighting for victims. And we need more women using their intuition to solve investigations. I hope you all walk away from these conversations inspired and ready to fight the good fight. Let's get into it.

Sarah A. Ford 03:38

Thanks for inviting me. This is amazing, great space. Great to see so many people here. This is wonderful.

Mandy Matney 03:44

Yes, thank you all for joining us tonight. It has been a journey in the last few years. And I can't thank you all enough for the support along the way. And that not only for you all you all support has been amazing. But meaning people like Sarah has been just life changing because you feel like you're alone and you're fighting against the grain. And there's no



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chance at any, any change. And then I met Sarah during the Bowen Turner case. And she really gave me a lot of inspiration and reminded me that you can do hard things and I've seen her do some really hard things. Sarah, thank you for joining us.

Sarah A. Ford 04:37

Thanks so much for having me. It's it's great to be here with y'all and to chat with you all and talk about all the things because there's so much going on every day it seems like more and more and more and things that we feel like we're up against the brick wall and how are we going to overcome how are we going to get over the brick wall? But it's so nice to be among people who see it. But it, there may be a brick wall in front of us. But we can get over it, we can make good things happen, we can make change for the people that need it the most. And so I'm glad to be here to chat with you. I'm so inspired by your story and the work that you do for victims. Because no one wants to read my motions and things like that. But the way you tell victims stories through the work, it's wonderful. So I'm grateful to be here with you. And to talk about all the things.

Mandy Matney 05:29

First things first, I think we should talk about the Bowen Turner case. Okay. Okay, yeah, let's jump in. Yeah. What did you learn from that case? And what can we learn to change the system from what happened there?

Sarah A. Ford 05:48

I think originally, you know, I was not involved with the case. But it happened in my hometown, where I grew up. And, you know, for me,



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being a former public defender and being a prosecutor and now a victims rights attorney, seeing the way that victims were being spoken of in a courtroom and what they were having to deal with, being bullied by adults in a in a community that I was from, just, it was horrifying to me. And I think, if I could say that I've learned one thing from that experience is that there are really good people in the world, even when you think that everyone is against you. And you think that we cannot, we can't do this, that it's too you know, it's too strong the system is against us. There are good people of the world. And it's those people that make it easier to keep going to keep fighting to keep pushing, even when you feel like you get slapped by the course you get slapped by, you know, some folks in the media or just slept, you know, walking in the grocery store. And you know, people literally say, Hey, turn their back, you know, I grew up there, I lived there. That's okay. And I think what you said earlier is that, you know, you're not alone in that. And sometimes you do feel like you're alone with that. But the survivors in that case, and, you know, the Stoller family and the best family are just, they're incredible people. And it was so tragic to to meet them at one of the worst moments in their lives, but to be able to try and give them some semblance of direction, in a really difficult experience. It was really a true privilege for me.

Mandy Matney 07:31

And validation. I think that a lot of victims, like Sandy, who's here, that's something that I've learned from just listening to them is not only do they want, they want justice, and they of course want to be heard, but validation, and just somebody to listen to them and and tell them you're not wrong here, this investigation is messed up. And the things that are happening here are messed up, and I'm gonna fight for you. It's huge.



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And I think that something that I've learned along the way is that a lot of times we just see something that's impossible, and you just walk away from it, because it's too hard. But if you think about the time, the little things that you can do, like give a victim validation and make them feel less alone. Maybe you cannot solve their case, maybe you cannot win in court, but at least they...you made it better for them.

Sarah A. Ford 08:31

Yeah. You know, as a former prosecutor, one of the things that used to frustrate me the most was, I would go in and I would have a victim. And the victim would often be sitting there by themselves with, you know, our victim advocate. And then you'd have a defendant would walk in, and they would have their mom and their dad, and their boss and their choir director and a third grade teacher in this entire group of people standing there, saying, you know, this perpetrator is a good person, they made a mistake, you know, whatever they're going to say, and you have a victim that's sitting there by themselves. And that used to really, it used to frustrate me a lot. And I think that's why I got into the work that I'm doing now with victims because they deserve to have someone stand there with them, and to fight for them and to represent them and say, You're not crazy for thinking this is, you know, this is not normal. This is not right. You have all of these rights, you just have to assert them, we can get these rights enforced. And so it's a real privilege to do that work. And to just make people feel that, you know, you may be in the worst situation that you've ever been in. But together, you know, I can't fix all the things I can't. I can't always, you know, have success in the courtroom, but you're not going to be alone. And that's always really important for people.



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Mandy Matney 09:56

And does it weigh heavy on you?

Sarah A. Ford 10:00

Sure. Yeah, yeah, it does. It does. But in a good way. It's a good heaviness, because at the end of the day, you know, I know who I am. I know that the work I do, I know my heart. And, you know, sometimes it has to be enough. People will always have something to say about you, right? You know, if you're ever if you're doing anything, they're always going to have something to say. But if you know what you're doing, if your heart is in the right place, if you're stepping out sometimes by yourself, to stand up for somebody who maybe doesn't have that voice. It's heavy, but it's a good heavy.

Mandy Matney 10:35

I realized that early, thankfully, kind of early on in the whole podcast saying, I have a lot of trolls, things about me. And I finally realized I felt like paralyzed. Like, if any moves that I make, they're going to make fun of me, they're going to laugh at me, they're going to ridicule me. And then I finally just had a kind of an epiphany that was like, they don't matter. A, they don't matter at all. And be if you stay true to yourself, and if you just keep going like no matter what they do, they're no matter what you do, they're going to laugh at you, they're going to pick you apart for some reason or another. But just shove that to the side. Once you shove that to the side. It's very revolutionary.

Sarah A. Ford 11:30

It is because you know, you're like, they don't have anything to say about people who aren't in the arena. That's one of my favorite quotes



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is, you know, my dad gave that quote to me by Theodore Roosevelt, my first office.

Mandy Matney 11:43

Oh it was Theodore Roosevelt and then Brene. Brene Brown, yeah.

Sarah A. Ford 11:47

Yeah. But you know, it's, it's, you know, you're in the arena, you're stepping in there, and it's okay to lose, but you're in the arena. And all the people up there kind of are saying, you know, you didn't do this right, or you didn't do that, right. But at least I'm in there. You know, I may be marred with blood and dirt all over my face, but I'm in there fighting the fight. And if you're not in there fighting the fight, I live, we're Brene Brown, tick this. I'm not interested in your feedback, if you don't have something to say, I'm not interested.

Mandy Matney 12:22

Yeah, I think that her quote was like, if you're not getting your ass kicked, I don't want to hear you. Interesting, because yeah, we both have, and it is hard. And it's something that I wish as a society, I don't even think people realize sometimes. So like, when you say things, it really matters and mean little tiny things. When I was deep inside the investigation and really not sleeping, and all I was doing was eating, sleeping and breathing Murdaugh, it was tiniest little things that would just break me apart. And I didn't even and a lot of people they start on emails and things with like, I don't mean to come across as blah, blah, blah, blah, right now. I'm really meaning to be helpful. And now I've just learned to delete those. Read the rest. Never knife. Never. Never. But



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yeah, you just got to realize how to take it and shove that to the side. That does not matter.

Sarah A. Ford 13:29

Yeah. If you're if you're not in there doing it, then, you know, doesn't matter. It doesn't matter. And it's, you know, I think like I said, I think most people are good people. But I think sometimes social media and the Internet gives people this mass that they think they can sell whatever they want. And there should be consequences to what we say I'm not, you know, we've got to make sure that, you know, if you say something mean, on the internet that that means you're a mean person, it doesn't mean you know, well, I just said it on the internet. So it doesn't matter. It does matter. And it's important because we have kids and young people that they've lived their entire lives on the internet and social media. I was lucky. I was like the last generation that like, you know, I had the cell phone and it was like don't use the cell phone. It's for emergencies only, you know, like, we only call it night and weekends. It was only free that you know, but we have a whole generation of kids that are coming up and this is all they know. And it's really difficult when they're faced with just really nastiness and it's it's it's hard.

Mandy Matney 14:38

But anyways, moving on. I could talk about that forever because it's just my...let's talk about how we elect our judges in South Carolina.

Sarah A. Ford 14:51

Fun. Guys hold Okay, have a sip first. Wow. So I think it's really interesting that South Carolina is one of only two states where the legislature appoints our judges, Alexa judges. And we've got to have a



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system, in my opinion, that needs some tweaks and needs some adjustments. Because we have really powerful lawyer legislators that make a lot of decisions about judges. And then they appear in front of those judges, and they're able to put off cases for 3456. I'm not joking. Seven years, I have cases, my paralegal is here right now. And she can confirm, we have cases that are years and years old. And so it makes me wonder is this the best way we could do this, surely we can make a better system.

Mandy Matney 15:50

Is the delay mostly because of their status when their legislator purpose?

Sarah A. Ford 15:57

So there's protection for lawyer legislators, really from January nowadays, it feels like it's all year long, right? It's like all the month all the month. So traditionally, it's just supposed to be until July, which is only half the year. But if they have any sort of heat, or you know, a hearing going on, or any sort of, you know, business from the legislature, they get to put off any cases. And so that's, that's really tough for a lot of prosecutors that are saying, you know, we've got six months to get all these cases with this particular lawyer legislator done. But that's just in one circuit. We have 16 circuits in South Carolina. So imagine if they've got cases all around the state how difficult it is. And I mean, they're only human as well, you can't prepare? You know, you can't be ready to try a case every week. That's just impossible. So in that sense, a lot of victims see their cases pushed for years and years and years. And it's just alarming because victims have the right to a prompt



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disposition. And I don't know about y'all, but for five years, that's not prompt at all. It's a damn travesty.

Mandy Matney 17:03

No, it's...we were looking into the Stephen Smith case, again this week and noticed two of the officers have died since Stephen died. I mean, that is how long time has passed. And it's insane. Yeah, it happens a lot. We've seen a lot of cases where witnesses will die, or their memory gets distorted, or it's, but it always works in the defense's favor, it does, yeah, the longer time passes, they want that to happen. And I remember, when I was investigating the boat crash, back in 2020, I remember getting a call that was like a decrepit lien is going, it's going to be five years before and this was imposed alive, this is going to be five years before the boat crash goes to trial, because he's going to be able to push it and push it and push it. And for that that would be those kids going from age 20 to 25. And looking back on when they were 20 or 19. And that's a long time to recall a traumatizing event. And what happens then is the defense wins, and there has to be something done. But what do you think is the solution? What are the solutions with the way that we are with our system and electing our judges?

Sarah A. Ford 18:38

I'm not someone that likes to, you know, if things need to be changed? I think we need to change them. But I don't think there are major changes that need to happen with our system. I think lawyer legislators need to get off the judicial merit selection commission. They're the ones that get to present the three. You know, they present the three right now, they can present up to three people who are qualified, nominated. And if something smells funny, you know, if it just doesn't pass the



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smell test. To me, that should be enough. If people are saying this doesn't feel right, this doesn't look right. Let's just make it a better process. I think that would be a good start. I think not limiting the number of people that you nominate. You know, right now, and our legislature has put off electing judges, because we have some members of the Senate who are saying, you know, we want judicial reform, to keep hearing a lot about judicial reform, but I don't see a lot of things happening. I'm not seeing any of these bills in committee. And that's frustrating because we're saying I say we but you know, people who are in the community are concerned about this, but we're not seeing a lot of action because those who have power, why would you want to give that up? You probably don't right? They're holding on to it. So I think, you know, figuring out what we can do with that JMISC. Getting more legislators off of there getting more regular people on that committee. You know, a lot of people who are nominated for judges in South Carolina have a lot of interesting connections with members of the legislature, you know, sons, daughters, law partners, you know, it's a bit of a pardon my language, but an incestuous cesspool, and it just doesn't smell right. And as someone who represents victims in the courtroom all the time, I see the advantages that lawyer legislators get whether they want to tell me I'm crazy for seeing that or not. I know what I see. And my clients, victims, and survivors in South Carolina know what they see. So there's definitely work to be done there. On March 21, our victims matter rally, our third annual victims matter rally is happening at the Statehouse. And it's just an opportunity to let the legislature know, victims are not alone. There are people that support them, there are people that stand with them. And we care and it's really cathartic and beautiful for victims and survivors to be together. And to have people that support them,



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surround them with such positivity and and love because it's hard, you know, when you're a victim and Marlboro County, South Carolina, and you're thinking this makes no sense. Why is all this stuff happening? And then you're able to connect with other people. And no, this is not right. And I can actually do something about it, there are people that will stand with me and stand in that courtroom with me that they'll fight for me, it's really a beautiful thing. And so I love that event. I'm very, I just I love that it keeps growing and you know that we have more and more victim service providers there and, you know, hear from from survivors, you know, every year that just say, it just makes me feel good to stand there with other people who get what I've been through. They know they've seen where our system has fallen short. And maybe we can't go back and fix what happened to me. But I can stay here and support people in the future. And I can say, You know what, it's not we're not gonna let it happen anymore. We're not gonna let it happen again. And that's just really powerful for survivors.

Mandy Matney 22:20

Yeah, I saw the Stollers hug Sandy Smith, and at that event, and it was just a really powerful, empowering moment, like, seeing these people connect with one another and seeing again, I think the theme of this conversation is making sure victims don't feel alone and whatever you can do for that. But seeing these victims come together and saying there was a woman that had a Justice for Stephen Smith sign and it was just amazing. And I can't wait for it this year and it will be less hot because we were really sweaty last year. So it was at nine o'clock in the morning in May. And I was like oh well it'll be fine. And Columbia is a different kind of hot. It's that different. The low country isn't even that hot. Oh my gosh, famously Hot. They're not joking. Nine o'clock in the



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morning. We're all like, Oh my God. Yeah, it'll be fun in March this year. I'm excited.

Sarah A. Ford 23:26

It'll be good. I'm very, very excited. And I'm really, you know, each year it's gotten bigger, and we've had more involvement. And so I'm really excited to have more people join us and, you know, some people they're like, I had no idea that victims had rights, like defendants have rights like yeah there's a whole base constitutional.

Mandy Matney 23:46

You know I get so excited, though, because you don't pay attention to the news and things like that. I don't even think I knew victims had a bill of rights until I started getting into this stuff.

Sarah A. Ford 24:01

I mean well, defendants rights are so ingrained in our consciousness, you know, kids playing like policemen are like you have the right to remain silent. They know. And, you know, those are things that we just we all know, you know, innocent until proven innocent till proven guilty. You know, if you can afford an attorney, one will be appointed for you. But, you know, the legal nerd in me is like article one section 24 of the South Carolina constitution says, Hey, victims, you have the right to an attorney, you have the right to be represented. You have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. You have the right to restitution which, oh, gosh, don't get me started on that. Victims have that right. Victims have the right to confer with the prosecutor. They have the right to speak at any hearing where bail or bond or sentencing is happening. They have so many rights and you're like I had no idea so



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anytime I can, you know, put my little nerd legal hat on and it makes me excited.

Mandy Matney 24:57

And through the murder case, people started really getting like standing up for Alex Murdaugh and being like, but he has weights about the victims. Firstly, hold on, take a step back. Can you picture yourself in Alex Murdaugh's shoes more than you can picture yourselves in the victims? Right? And like, sorry, I can't picture myself in his shoes. So I don't care.

Sarah A. Ford 25:28

And but it's I mean, you know, our system has to have all of the players, you know, we have to have prosecutors, we have to have defense attorneys and attorneys matter we have to have, everybody plays their part. But our system is not designed with victims in mind. It's just not, you know, victims for so long have been pushed to the side. And you know, I hear, you know, I've been working on a case this week, where it's like the victims even have standing. And I'm like, well, we can argue about it in court. I'm excited to argue that but you know, we've gotten but for what happened to the victim, nobody would be doing it, we wouldn't have law enforcement involved, prosecutors get nothing. And yet we leave victims out until the very end, it's like, by the way, two o'clock, she's going to plead guilty. It's like, whoa, hold up.

Mandy Matney 26:14

It's not informing. And yet, we've talked about this too, about how a lot of times they take the victims bill of rights as a like checklist, instead of like, oh, actually, we shouldn't make these people feel like they've been



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like validated hold or not hold, but like just help them and make them feel like we did something for them and make them feel like the system didn't stop all over them.

Sarah A. Ford 26:41

And it doesn't take a whole lot to do that. There's so many resources out there, you just have to have a conversation with someone, you know, I used to, I used to do a lot of prosecutions with crimes against women and children. And, you know, we used to have people say, well, and other victims here, they want to drop the charges. And so it's a well, you just want to send them away and say no, I want to talk to them. What did they have to say? And the victim would come in and say I want to drop these charges? And my question is always, it may be I'm not asking them this directly. But me why? What is it? Is this really..did it happen? Is it because they don't have anyone bringing in money to their house? So they can't feed their kids? And they don't know how they're going to pay the electric bill? Is that what it is? Is it you know, they've left time and time before? And it's, you know, they've not been able to just extricate themselves from the cycle of violence, what is it, and we have to have conversations with people that are admittedly very difficult to have. But it's essential if we are going to really serve and support victims and survivors, that's the only thing that's going to change, and that they have to care, right.?

Mandy Matney 27:57

What a lot of times when you would ask that specifically in domestic violence situations, what was the answer?



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Sarah A. Ford 28:06

Almost 90% of the time it was economics. You know, it's, um, oftentimes the perpetrator was the breadwinner. You know, if you've got three or four kids at home, you know, you're on the brink of getting evicted from your apartment. The car was impounded when the person was arrested. You know, those are things that, you know, if you don't have a job, and the only person that did have a job is in jail, I understand. I understand a mom wants its survival. It's saying, You know what, I can put up with that, so my kids can eat, and it shouldn't be that way. But it's asking those questions and saying, Okay, what does this person need to make their life better, so that they don't have to come in here, you know, people, oh, we got another frequent flyer. And that's really frustrating, because these are people who are important, and what's happening to the matters and helping them the best way we can, giving them support, giving them resources, giving them direction, and really just giving them respect and dignity, treating them, like we would all want to be treated is really the key. You know, we just keep...

Mandy Matney 29:17

That's something that people...and I didn't realize it until a couple of years ago talking to a lot of lawyers and the problem with domestic violence and the problem and how important it is for women to be economically dependent. Just for survival sake, just so you have an exit plan, because that happens so often. And what is as a prosecutor, what do you do at that point when the victim does not want to press charges?



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Sarah A. Ford 29:48

So one thing I always like to tell people is that victims often think that the state or the prosecutor, the assistant solicitor, well, that's my lawyer. Did you know the state can certainly be obligated by law to look out for the interests of the victim, but they represent the interests of the state. And so in 85-90% of the cases, what the victim wants and what the state wants, you're going down that highway the same way. But what if you want to take a right turn or a left turn, you say, hey, I'm not okay with, you know, my counseling records being provided to the defense. You know, oftentimes victims will say, Well, why did they get together and say, Well, no, you can fight that. They're like, well, the prosecutor said that, you know, I can sign this release, and, you know, do that and is like, well, you can, but you don't have to. So I think, you know, making sure that people are aware of the differences. You know, the vast majority of prosecutors, judges, lawyers are good, honest, hard working people. But I think making sure that everyone understands that there are resources out there to support you whether you are a victim of domestic violence, or you find that your case has been dragging on for years and years and years. Or you just need support to be with people who who understand that's, that's really just knowing that people are not alone, whether it's people who are in the public eye, and you're getting, let me just tell you about your hair, Sarah, or, you know, or you're you're a victim thinking that you're the only one going through this. There are people that get it help.

Mandy Matney 31:28

Have you dealt with a lot? I feel like there's a lot of shame with victims in our society, like, all of a sudden, if you're a victim in the court system, they feel like, oh, have you seen that, and I've seen it, and it's horrible.



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Sarah A. Ford 31:44

You know, anytime. You know, the work that we do at South County Victim Assistance Network, on the legal director, we have an amazing team shout out to Nicole McCune, whose victim service provider and paralegal she keeps wonderful. We have six attorneys, and we have four victim service providers, victim advocates, paralegals, and it is so incredibly important, you know, the work that we're able to do and support these victims. Because when a victim calls us and says this is what's happening, or this is you know, what's going on, they think that their situation is the only situation like this until you hear a podcast like Mandy's where it's like, not all of this other stuff is happening. But the work that we're able to do and you know, the motions and things that we're able to write and things that we're able to push. These are things that nobody's really doing this work for victims. And, you know, anytime we can draw attention to saying, Okay, I'm not going to call names, but I got an email from a judge this week who said, in 30 years, I've never had a victim's attorney. take such a position. I've never even seen a victim's attorney in a courtroom. I was like, Oh, that's cute. There's a first time for everything. Me, hi it's me. Hi. I'm the problem, it's me. But it's you know, just because we've always done things a certain way or where the system is, well, we've never done this or I've never had to, you know, do a hearing because victims requested that. It's okay, you guys are gonna be okay.

Mandy Matney 33:27

But it's like it's, it should be the whole reason why the system exists. And then they completely forget. And then they're like, oh, who are you? What are we doing?



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Sarah A. Ford 33:36

What are we doing? But you know, the work that victim advocates and victim service are able to do and to work with victims. It's so incredibly important. And it's a true privilege to do that work. It really is. Ladies and gentlemen many bad needs therapy.

Mandy Matney 34:01

And we'll be right back with Mackenzie Fultz. Cups up Mackenzie! So excited to have you on the show. Cheers. Cheers. Tell us a little about yourself. You're also known as Freedom Barbie on the internet. You have a huge following that reached me a couple months ago and I got really excited. So tell me about yourself.

Mackenzie Fultz 34:27

I was so excited when you posted one of the videos that I posted. I was like, Oh my gosh, it's her like I had heard your name and I was so I was so thrilled. It was so great. So my name is Mackenzie Fultz I'm a private investigator. I've been in the PR industry here in Florida for the last 17 years. So just fresh out of college and kinda got into the pie world because I well actually I wanted to be on the SWAT team got my dad, my family's law enforcement. My dad was a cop and I wanted to be on...I wanted to be on the SWAT team and I just thought it was cool and kicking down doors. My dad, and I would always go shoot together. So that was something I really loved. And anyway, I wanted to be on the SWAT team, I told my college professor that and he said, Well, you can't have your nails done if you're going to be on the SWAT team. Like, that's silly. And I was like, Okay, and so just to be kind of like a jerk. And this is like, in the middle of class. And so like, just to be kind of the class clown. Because I was embarrassed, I had to say something back. And so I said,



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Well, I'll make my own rules. I'm going to be a private dick. Hahaha. And the whole class laughed, and they thought it was funny. And, you know, I was a class clown. That's what I wanted. And so I was like, great. And then he said, you'll never make it in that industry, because you're a girl. And that's a man's industry. And I was so taken aback that I was just, I just kind of like sank back in my chair. Like, I was like, well, whatever. And so then I got home. And I was like, I wonder if I actually really could be a PI. So I got on the Google machine, and I'm like, what do I have to do to be a PI in Florida? And I followed all the steps and did all the things contacted the people, took the courses, and before you know it, I'm a legit licensed private investigator in Florida with a full time job like that. I've never done this before in my life, and they just like, let me be a PI. And that was the beginning of everything.

Mandy Matney 36:11

That's amazing. What class was that? Where your stupid professors said you couldn't do it? Because you're a woman.

Mackenzie Fultz 36:20

It was a it was a careers, criminal justice careers class.

Mandy Matney 36:24

You're majoring in criminal justice.

Mackenzie Fultz 36:27

Yeah. And the whole course was about like, what can you do with your into the college that I went to, they had like placement programs. So like, when you graduated, they wanted to help place you in a job of your choice, like whatever that is, or whatever. And so we were talking about



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the different jobs you could do, how much money you can make and the different jobs and everything. And I was like, Listen, I don't be on the SWAT team. And he said, No, so I came back. And he said no, again, and I was like, but I probably really could.

Mandy Matney 36:51

It sounds like every job. He's like, no women can't do that. Please, sexist and horrible.

Mackenzie Fultz 36:57

Yeah, like, and this. Listen, I'm almost 40. This year, so maybe it was a long time ago. But it wasn't that long ago, we're, we're still limiting women on what we can do for work. Right.

Mandy Matney 37:07

And just because, and, and I think women have really great pie skills, which is why you're on the show, like I all of our fans find things are so good at finding things out about people, criminals, men, whatever, like, way better than the cops that I know, the cops are like, Ooh, how do I access Snapchat? And I mean, not all the cops. Some of my cop sources are great. But you know what I mean? Like, sometimes they're women. So I feel like it's instinctual for a lot of women to do this kind of work. And they're just naturally good at it. Do you think that too?

Mackenzie Fultz 37:51

It's a superpower, right? So women are naturally more inquisitive or naturally nosy...we are, we naturally have these desires to know things. And our brain just works a little bit differently. And so I feel like that kind of lends itself to being better in the PI field as a woman because and



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especially because if you find yourself in a situation where you need to get information, right, a lot of private investigators are their ex military, their ex law enforcement, this is something they're doing as like, just kind of I've retired, but I still want to work kind of job. And so they are very, they're very militant in the way they dress and the way they walk. And probably you don't, you just don't get rid of that. Right? Like, it just kind of stays with you. And so imagine going up to someone and trying to get information from them. And you're this big, burly guy and you're like, hello, I would get some information. Or you have this pretty blonde girl that's like Hi. Oh my gosh, can you help me with this and like, and then they just they're not your they're not intimidated by you. And right, you can use it and that's a skill.

Mandy Matney 38:52

Yeah. I used to think it's so funny in the last few years. I've really noticed this, like I used to think of those guys in suits. They just had so much going on with them, but it's like no, they actually can't. A lot of their intimidation is not good. Because people just shut down and are like I don't relate to you I don't know how to talk to you. Instead, you could just come up and your pain could be like Hey girl, tell me what's going on here. And that's what I've done a lot of journalism and I think that we relate to that type of skill of just the old talking to people and getting the dirt from them. Very long way.

Mackenzie Fultz 39:37

It's true and when you're I have such a big personality that a lot of people like how are you a pie with his personality? But what you don't understand is along with my personality comes the desire to like be friend Pete like I just naturally I do I've never met a stranger like if you've



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come in contact with me in public or otherwise, whatever you are immediately my friend like there is love and kindness and I'm So excited to see you even if I don't know you. And so I think that really that lends itself to kind of like people just feel good around you. And so that's, you know, it makes you feel good. It makes them feel good. And they get the information. Right, exactly.

Mandy Matney 40:12

And they yeah, it's like that warm energy people really respond to. Yes, you are so good. And I've watched a million of your videos, you're so good at quickly telling stories while you're doing makeup, which is amazing, because I cannot do two things at once for the life of me. Like I said, for this, I had to stop what I was doing to do my makeup and do my hair and not do anything else. Can you tell us a quick crazy PII story to give our audience an idea of the types of stories that you tell based on the kind of work that you've done?

Mackenzie Fultz 40:48

Yeah so, I actually do a lot of insurance fraud cases. So a lot of it is insurance companies and attorneys coming saying, Hey, this guy is like in this car accident. You know, he's suing GEICO for like \$13 million. You know, he says he can never work again. And then I go out and I catch him like, you know, skydiving, he says, I could never go drive again. Or I can't I can't drive my car. Or the most recent story I posted was the guy like he literally said he could never drive again. But he was waiting for his settlement from this insurance company. He wanted \$30 million. So he could buy the car that he wanted. So he's car shopping while I'm doing surveillance on him. He actually like of course, pretended to look in the same car, I pretended to be interested in the same car that he



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was. And so I'm at the dealership. And I'm kind of leaning in listening to the the car salesman as he's talking about this car just to let them know that I'm that I'm listening to hear what he has to say because I'm interested also, the car salesman goes inside and he comes out or the the guy, my subject, who's looking at the car says, Hey, listen, we're gonna go on this on this test drive. Why don't you just come with you're already interested in the car, like just join us. So it was going to be me and him and the car salesman, we're gonna go take a spin in this car, the intercom goes off and asks for the salesman. So he's like, Hey, listen, I'm gonna go inside. I gotta take care of something. I'm going to you know, you guys just go take it for a test drive, whatever. So I end up getting in a car with a strange man that I've no idea how to test drive it in. Okay, because I wanted to document him inside the car actually driving because outside the car, he was holding his arm real close, like and just laying like, oh, I can't move my arm. So things so I get into this car with a strange man and I'm videotaping him actually using it to drive and while we're in the car, we're driving down the road and he looked he turns and looks at me and goes I could I could kidnap you and no one would ever find us until we're halfway out of town ha ha. I'm for sure gonna be murdered like there I'm he's gonna do a murder like I'm it's fine. Like my best friend knows to hear my browser history like those. That's all I remember thinking about was I hope she clears my browser. Anyway, so stuff like that. And I do a lot of cheating, cheating spouse cases like crazy, crazy stories about these. I actually did a celebrity sports baller and he he was cheating on his wife and he had come here with his mistress. They flew on two separate flights, they flew into Florida on two separate flights. But then they walked to each other. So like, they did that to kind of not put their names on the same itinerary. And so when he got off his flight, he walked to her flight and



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they met and then they went to go pick up their luggage. Anyway, so they stayed the weekend here. And then the wife actually it was actually her dad, the wife's dad who wanted to do surveillance because she didn't want to believe what he was doing. And so she flew me out there out towards the west coast and to do surveillance on him out there and caught a bunch of crazy videos of him with his mistress, who he proposed to while he's texting his wife saying he misses her and that he wants to work things out. They had been fighting and yeah, it was a doozy. Friggin doozy crazy These people are nuts.

Mandy Matney 43:55

Is that depressing to you to see like, how many men cheat and how terrible they are? Like, I feel like that would weigh me down a little bit.

Mackenzie Fultz 44:06

It does. I'll be honest, it does in the beginning, but you get numb to it like you like just like anything negative that you know, anything negative that happens. You just get numb to it. And you just kind of realize like, this is my job like this is this is what I do like this. This is the information that they paid me to find out. These are the skills I have to find it out and that's my job. That's what I do. But it does kind of hurt your feelings a little bit, but I'll be honest with you, a lot of times a woman will hire me to follow her husband or whatever. And I won't catch him cheating at all. Not to say he's not cheating, but I won't catch him. But I do normally catch them when it's a wife cheating or a female cheating. I catch them more often than the men and so I find that interesting considering the fact that women are more thoughtful about that stuff and a little more sly, you know when it comes to stuff like that. So it makes me wonder if women actually do cheat more.



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Mandy Matney 44:56

And do women suspect it more? Are you hired by like...are you more women who hire you for cheating surveillance versus men?

Mackenzie Fultz 45:09

Yeah, it's more women. But if a, you can jet you can sometimes tell. I've had some men hire me that were like, I, they, they knew that their wives were cheating. They just wanted to find out who the guy was. So they can beat him up. And I'm like, yeah, I can't, I'm not gonna give you that guy's information. No, we're not going there.

Mandy Matney 45:28

Oh my gosh, do you carry when you like how do you protect yourself? When you're doing surveillance in these kind of scary situations? Like being in a car with your subject? That's kind of scary. How do you stay safe.

Mackenzie Fultz 45:45

So for the sake of just not saying one way or the other, just know that I feel very well protected.

Mandy Matney 45:53

Good. I'm just glad I was worried about you.

Mackenzie Fultz 45:57

So actually, my dad was a firearms instructor for the sheriff's office when I grew up. And so he trained me a lot, we would go to the range, and we would do the dueling tree like we did a lot of training. And so I'm very comfortable around firearms, I know them really well. I'm very well



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trained. I actually train often. My husband and I go on date nights, and we train so I do feel very well protected when I go out in the field.

Mandy Matney 46:19

My husband's looking at me like we need to do that.

Mackenzie Fultz 46:23

We go get sushi and go to the gun range.

Mandy Matney 46:26

That's what makes it fun. I love that.

Mackenzie Fultz 46:28

We get it, we get each other a gun every birthday. We just, we love it. We're hobbyists.

Mandy Matney 46:34

I like it. Um, yeah, I mean, I feel like that would be the one thing as a woman that would maybe prevent you a little bit. For me, there are some things that I just won't do by myself, won't go, just don't feel safe. And it's kind of a you have to draw those lines for yourself, do you? Do you turn down cases that are like, too dangerous?

Mackenzie Fultz 47:00

Um, so in the beginning, in the beginning, I was very, I'm very competitive. And so I feel like since my college professor told me, You're a girl, you can never do that. I feel like if I turned down a job because I feel unsafe, all I'm doing is basically making him accurate, like, oh, you're a girl, you can't do that that's unsafe, right. So in the beginning,



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like in the beginning, I would absolutely go out like I didn't care how dangerous it was like I was going to do this, I was going to do this job, I didn't care who was there, I didn't care what was going to happen, like I was absolutely going to show up. Little by little I kind of learned that, like, my safety was more important than my pride. And so there were certain areas that I kind of stopped working. And I was like, Don't even ask me to work there. I don't even care. I just don't like that I had to stop, I had to put my pride aside and just stop worrying about like, you know, if they thought I was only as good as your last case, right? And if you turned down a case, in the private investigation, eight like kind of industry, we kind of work with one another. Like most of the time a private investigator doesn't just work with one company, like you're working with this guy, and this company, and this individual person has a company and agency and all this stuff. And so if you turn down a case, that's all they're gonna, they're gonna remember that if they call you, you're gonna say no. And so they won't call you for cases anymore. And so I wanted to make it a point that all do it like nobody else would do it. I'll do it. And so I did have to learn that like sometimes you gotta say no. something

Mandy Matney 48:24

Something else I wanted to talk to you about. So it seems like you have a pretty big range with the things that you've done as a PI. Have you been? Have you ever been hired for a murder investigation?

Mackenzie Fultz 48:38

Um, yeah, actually a couple of them. So what's difficult about being hired to investigate a murder after it's already been investigated by law enforcement is the access to records the access to evidence,



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everything's been destroyed and looked through and everything's like, and then if it's still open, and they're still investigating, or if it's just not closed, you don't have access to literally anything, and they just put like a huge damper on everything. But I will say that law enforcement officers are bound by a certain set of rules, I am not bound by those same set of rules. So where law enforcement officers have to have like, they have to have warrants and they have to have like, you know, reasonable calls or whatever it's called, like, I don't need any of that all like all I have to do is walk up to someone pretend to be someone else and just like, do a little social engineering to get some information right. So I don't have to announce myself as a law enforcement officer. I don't know if I don't even know if that's still a rule anymore. But anyways, I can get around those things differently than a law enforcement officer can but still, it's the evidence that you don't get to have as much access to and that's what hinders your investigation. So a lot of when you're working on a murder it's a lot of talking to people but you have to rely on the words of others like you have no choice but I haven't done very many like I haven't done enough to really like speak on it or anything. But that's my experience is that you have to talk to a lot of people.

Mandy Matney 50:03

Well, but that's how some murders are solved.

Mackenzie Fultz 50:06

Yeah, that's true, too.



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Mandy Matney 50:07

Yeah, I mean, sometimes there's just no evidence, especially years later, have you been able to solve, like, have you been hired and were able to find who did it?

Mackenzie Fultz 50:19

I've just been involved in three, and only one of them had a solution. And I, I think it was, they said that we didn't have anything to do with it, but I think we did. But they solved the murder of this woman's son. And it was because we found a witness that they had not found. And we spoke to this witness, but because they were able to bring him in and get more information out of him and continue to continue to talk to him, then they were able to solve it, but I feel like it was because of our work. If it wasn't for us. It was great. But the other two that I worked on, they're still not solved.

Mandy Matney 50:54

Yeah, as I ask because there's a murder here I might need your help on. We're gonna take a quick commercial break. So on that note, we'll be right back. You did something unique as a PI. You started...did you start on TikTok or Instagram?

Mackenzie Fultz 51:19

I think I start I started posting I started on both platforms, but TikTok started blowing up before Instagram did.

Mandy Matney 51:26

And when did you start sharing your PI stories on there?



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Mackenzie Fultz 51:30

So, well, what happened real quick was when I was doing surveillance in my car for years and years and years, I started playing with makeup. And it was just something like you. You're literally bored to tears for hours. Sometimes it's like 1820 hours of surveillance. Yeah, so you're watching YouTube videos, you're doing makeup, and so I'd bring my makeup with me. And that's what I did to fill my day is to play with makeup, I got really good at it. Well, then, over the course of several years, I just you know, I would try different makeup products. And I saw this makeup online that I thought was actually really stupid. And so I was like, Oh, I gotta try that just like every other product. And I really liked it. Well, turns out it was a direct sales company. So I joined this direct sales company thinking it was just like affiliate marketing, I didn't know. So then I. So I got in with this company. And now I kind of liking it after hating it for the first time, I really wanted to hate it because I don't direct sales was gross to me. And so then I really actually started liking it. I liked the company. And so I started making videos because success leaves clues. I see all these other people making videos. So I started making videos. And now I was selling the makeup really well after having zero social media, no following whatsoever that people were buying this makeup from me. So I was like, imagine if I had, if I was on more social media, then I'd get more sales. And so now it became like a challenge. Now it became like something that I've never done. Didn't know, didn't think I could do that I wanted to do anyway. So I started realizing that I was just sounding like a bunch of the other the other reps for the company and I wanted to do something different. So that was in January that I found this company and in September was when I started telling PII stories, because I was like, Alright, these stories are stupid. No one's gonna think this is funny. But maybe if it's like funny,



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then it'll be something different than just as boring makeup videos, right? So I told a story, my very first big story that I told was about a woman who hired me to do surveillance on her boyfriend, who was at their home while she was out of town. And she said, I just want to know what's going on. I want to know if that hole was coming over, in her words. So anyway, so there's I pull up this guy's house, it's like 11 o'clock at night, and there's a car and SUV backed into the driveway. And in order to find out who the car belongs to, I got to walk behind it, get the tag number. So I was prepared to get out of my car, go walk up the driveway, look behind the car and get the tag number will as I get out of my car and I start walking that way. This neighbor comes out. He's his garage was open, but I didn't realize he was outside. It's like dark. And he's smoking. And he says what are you doing over there? And I'm like, looking for my cat. And so then him and I start searching for this cat, this imaginary cat. And he's like, Well, what does it look like? So then I start describing the cat I had in second grade is orange black cat. His name was Garfield. And so but I called him Felix because feline Felix and so I was like this. His name is Felix and he's going here, Felix and I'm going here, Felix and we're both looking under this car. And meanwhile, I'm trying to like make my way to the back of the car to like look for Felix but then the guy looked back there. And so I will start walking back and he's like, already looked back there. So I can never get this friggin tag number and I just I could never look behind the car and so I can't, I can't look at the VIN number like I can't do anything cuz this guy is watching me. He's inside. He's like, I'm gonna go make flyers for your cat. We're gonna find this animal. And so we spend like 30 minutes looking for this imaginary. And then finally he goes, I'm gonna go inside. I'm gonna make I'm gonna start making flyers for you don't worry. And he is like, I'm like, thank you so much like a cow. This carriage is missing. And so



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then he goes inside. So I rushed behind the car. There's no tag on the car. I cannot. I cannot identify this vehicle, right? So before I can get my flashlight out on my phone to get the VIN number and take it down. This guy comes out and by this time I'm like It's too suspicious like I can't risk it. So But anyways, um, so that was the very first story that I told about was that one, and to me doing surveillance for as long as I had it, the stories are not funny. Like, they're just it's like, once you do something for so long, it's not interesting anymore. But everybody told me Oh, you gotta tell these PII stories, and I'm like, man, no one's gonna care. I'm gonna listen. And then people actually thought it was funny. And I was like, All right, and then a couple of people asked me about the makeup that I was selling. And I was like, hey, that's kind of cool. Some people ask me about, you know, whatever. And so the rest was just literally history. Like it just took off. I just kept telling more and more stories. And TikTok took off and then Instagram took off. The producer of my podcast actually found me on TikTok. And she's like, oh, my gosh, I've been dying to do like a private investigator style podcast. Do you want a podcast? And I'm like, a guess. So like, I don't know what that entails. But sure, I guess. And it's just been, it's been this amazing, like a blow up of just everything.

Mandy Matney 55:57

That's awesome. So how when did you start your podcast?

Mackenzie Fultz 56:01

The podcast is going to be a year old this April. Wow.

Mandy Matney 56:03

So you this is all you blew up real quick.



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Mackenzie Fultz 56:08

Really, really fast. Like I had I think January of last year I had. By January of last year, I had told probably like 20 Something PI stories or something like that. And my husband's birthday was January 23. We went to Sonny's BBQ where you can eat ribs. And him and his little car buddies. And they go in there and they talk cars and they eat all the ribs. They eat the restaurant out of ribs every year. It's something they take pride in, I don't know, whatever. But anyways, I walked into that restaurant with like 900 followers, and I walked out with 50,000 followers on Instagram. Because my want once you watch one video, you want to watch the rest. So it was I had like 25 videos going viral at the same time. Oh, wow. And so it my following blew up. And then that month, I became a top seller in the company. And I've never not been a top seller or a top recruiter in this direct sales company that I never realized I was doing good.

Mandy Matney 56:59

That's amazing. I love that.

Mackenzie Fultz 57:02

It's been so fun. And I love makeup so much. And I always like I love being on social media because my personality is just, it suits my personality just to and I've never, I don't know, growing up, I was ugly. I never had friends. And so now I have all these friends and like, you know, my customers and people that follow me. And we just connect about everything, even not makeup stuff. And it's just, it's such a cool group of women. And I love being someone that has a platform where I can, you know, kind of share my experience as a pie. A lot of women have told me that they Oh, I've you know, I've looked into being a pie



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now. Thank you for your inspiration, or, Oh, I feel so much prettier in my makeup. And it's like, it feels really good to be someone who's out there just like helping other women in their career, their makeup or something silly. That seems silly to you, you know, right.

Mandy Matney 57:47

I mean, I think with you. A lot of women, Liz, my co-host and I have worked together for a really long time. And when we were journalists years ago, we always have like a pipe dream of becoming of having our own private investigator, little firm or whatever. Because we were like, we're really good at like getting information out of people. And this is so fun. But you don't hear of a lot of any, you don't see a lot of examples of women being PI's.

Mackenzie Fultz 58:17

Because we're told we can't.

Mandy Matney 58:21

It's crazy. And I like to...with our platform, I like to encourage women to be in any job that they want. That gives them satisfaction, but especially in the legal and justice field, there's just women who could make such a huge difference. I've seen so many cases that when a female detective comes along, she just makes different observations. And she sees things different than a lot of the boys. Yeah. And we need that like murder case. There's murder cases unsolved everywhere. So it's time to change things up with the cops and like what we think of the ideal like a police officer, and maybe they can be maybe they can wear pink and have pretty blonde hair and do makeup and still be a good cop. Like, why does society think that we can't do that?



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Mackenzie Fultz 59:19

When you have a lot of people think that oh, women, you know, a lot of like, a lot of the law enforcement jobs are a lot of men because it requires like, you know, this intimidation factor and all this stuff. But what about the compassion? Like if you solve if you're a detective and you're solving a case just solely based on facts, right, which is great. That's how that's how an investigation is completed. You have all the facts, you have all the evidence, you put it together. But the way you find more facts and evidence is when you're thinking with compassion, and you're thinking about okay, what did these people go through? Let me experience that for myself. And I feel like women are really good at that because we're more nurturing and more caring. And so if feel like we have the ability to bring something that maybe a man doesn't. And I'm not saying that men aren't good at their jobs, but I'm just saying that there is room for everybody. And we all bring different things to the table that maybe someone else doesn't. And so women, I think for when you, when you add a woman, it's just a different, she just adds a different level of like compassion and nurturing that helps to get more information.

Mandy Matney 1:00:20

Yeah and just cares. A lot of cases that I've come across, it's like, nobody gave a shit. And that's why nothing got solved, like nobody cared in this entire case. And sometimes, that's just having compassion. And actually caring is, is also a skill that women need to know that they can use. And, yeah, I would like to see a rise in like women, police officers. I know, we've seen a rise in female attorneys. But I think the podcasting and social media, the great thing is that we don't have to have Hollywood representing these types of people to set an example and to inspire



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other people, you can, we can just do it now. Absolutely. And I think that's huge with your platform.

Mackenzie Fultz 1:01:11

Well, that's why I love what you do, too. Because, like, as a woman, I imagined that there was, I don't know, it feels sexist, but like, at the same time, there's just something that you as a woman probably contribute to your field as opposed to a man, there's just, there's just something a little bit softer, maybe a little bit more understanding, a little bit more tender. And although women can be like women are badass is right. But I feel like we also we can do that. And we can kind of have that tenderness that really helps helps us in our field, whatever that is. And so there's just something we can bring to it that you know, that I think is valuable, right?

Mandy Matney 1:01:48

What is your advice to women that want to get involved in PII and will want that as a career?

Mackenzie Fultz 1:01:55

I think a lot of people look at private investigation and like, Oh my God, how do you even do that? A lot of people are like, they'll message me, they'll say, so how do you become a PII girl, go to the Google machine type? And how do I become a private investigator in and then put in your state's name, and it will literally tell you okay, you have like in Florida, it'll tell you Florida Division of licensing and consider Oh, McKenzie, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. Under the licensing, it'll tell you how to get a CC license, which is like an intern license, a C license and agency laser managed, like, it'll tell you



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how to get all these things. It is literally right at your fingertips, just type in how do I become a private investigator and then put your state and you can, it is so much easier than you think many states don't even require a license. In Florida, you just take a 40 hour course. I happen to have a criminal justice degree, a bachelor's degree in criminal justice, but they don't require it. If you have any law enforcement or military background, you probably it's a shoo in. So just Google it and you can find so easily and women are needed in this field. And I think that's because people just have you tend to be less intimidating as a woman, right? And it's kind of easier to do your job sometimes. I also it does kind of maybe make things a little more dangerous because people aren't aren't intimidated by you. So they're like, Oh, well, you know, you don't scare me. I don't want to give you any information. But that's where you know, being a girl kind of comes in you can be just so innocent. And oh, I'm so sorry. I didn't know. And then just get your information girl.

Mandy Matney 1:03:24

I love that. Well, Mackenzie, this is amazing.

Mackenzie Fultz 1:03:29

I'm so glad you had me on the show. Thank you so much.

Mandy Matney 1:03:32

This was wonderful. If you guys love true crime,

Mackenzie Fultz 1:03:34

Which obviously you do or wouldn't be here. And if you love Mandy Matney which of course you do, you might really like my podcast, it's called the Dating Detectives and you can catch that every Monday we



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have a new episode, get it anywhere you get your podcast, it's more true crime light. So it's not necessarily like the big dog murders and stuff like Miss Mandy covers. But we do a lot of like a relationship based stuff we call like dog fish and, you know, liars cheaters con men and relationships. So check it out. You might really like it, especially if you're if you love the true crime space.

Mandy Matney 1:04:06

I think our people will love that. It's a good show. It's fun. And I actually we've had several fans say that they've listened to your podcast so this is Oh yeah, that's so exciting, an exciting crossover. Yeah, I love that. And with that, cups down. 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.