



EPISODE 7: The Truth Behind True Crime Documentaries Plus Russell's Revenge

[00:00:00] **Mandy Matney:** Happy Friday and hello, Murdaugh Murders Podcast fans. Welcome to our seventh Cup of Justice bonus episode with Liz Farrell and Jackhammer of Justice, attorney Eric Bland. So this week, HBO Max dropped its true crime documentary series on the Murdaugh murders, which is called Low Country: The Murdaugh Dynasty. This is really the first big budget true crime doc on the Murdaugh case, and there is a lot of buzz about it, naturally. But to be honest, we're happy that we were not a part of it, and we will tell you why in today's episode.

[00:00:43] This week, Liz, Eric, and I talked about the behind-the-scenes buzz in the Judge Carmen Mullen scandal. And real quick, I wanna mention our call to action in this case. Liz and I need as many voices as we can to speak up and tell the South Carolina Supreme Court that we are done with the darkness. Liz and I want to see transparency and we want to see accountability when it comes to how judges are investigated after they're accused of corruption or other bad behavior. Check out the Murdaugh Murders Podcast social media and our website for more information about how you can share your thoughts with our five South Carolina Supreme Court justices. There is strength in numbers, and right now, Liz and I need as much strength as we can muster so that we can see real change.

[00:01:41] Another thing that we talked about in this episode, in the last five days, there have been some shocking filings in the lead up to Russell Laffitte's federal trial, which is set to begin next Monday. It looks like Russell has decided to take no prisoners with PMPED and Palmetto State Bank. Can I just say we are here for that? So let's get into it.

[00:02:12] **Liz Farrell:** Hello, Eric. How are you doing?

[00:02:14] **Eric Bland:** Hey there.

[00:02:15] **Liz Farrell:** Mandy, how are you?

[00:02:16] **Mandy Matney:** Hello. We're doing good.



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[00:02:18] **Liz Farrell:** Good. I know that we've all been busy catching up on all the motions that have been filed in the Russell Laffitte trial, which is set to start next week. But first, I wanted to talk to you guys about the HBO documentary that is going to air Thursday evening, Were you part of that, Eric?

[00:02:38] **Eric Bland:** I was not. I had signed early on before I really was educated on this whole documentary process and what you should and should not do. I wouldn't say I was bullied into it, but I was convinced that this was the right thing to do and I ended up signing an exclusive that covenanted me out of being in documentaries for an entire year. It's up this November of 2022, so I am only able to be in one documentary of a competitor of HBO. I can participate, obviously, in news programs, in *Dateline*, in *20/20*, in your podcasts, but I cannot be on the documentaries.

[00:03:15] **Liz Farrell:** But Mandy, you have a lot of experience with what Eric said because I feel like, especially before I jumped back into journalism, I got to see what you were going through, not only with the story breaking so quickly all the time, but with sort of we were calling them the "vultures." You just had a lot of people come outta the woodwork and want you to participate in their documentaries, and then when you didn't, ultimately, I think there were a lot of misconceptions just on social media about who you were signed with and what you were doing. So I want people to hear a little bit more about what your thinking was there and sort of what it was like for you at that time with all those documentaries coming about and what that world is like because it is so different from the inside.

[00:03:58] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah. It's so much different than journalism. So I think a couple things that like, I had no idea how any of this worked. I was completely, like Eric said, just completely oblivious to this documentary world, and it's very tough to navigate through. And I think what I came to realize is these companies are very used to dealing with people that have no idea what they're doing. And so, they bully. They convince you that their way is the only way. They convince you that you will never be able to do anything on your own. You have to go with these big companies. And I almost signed up for HBO. I did. There was a point, I think last summer, where, I mean, I thought it was the coolest thing in the world. HBO Max are making a documentary and they want me to be a part of it and they want me to be, I think it was a consulting producer or something like that?



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[00:04:49] **Liz Farrell:** I feel like you should mention, though, Mandy, how like you are the biggest documentary nerd that I've ever met in my life, so.

[00:04:57] **Mandy Matney:** I am. I am. Especially true crime. Yeah, I've watched like all of them. So this was like a world that I always kind of wanted to be a part of and had no idea how it worked and was so excited when I was getting like these big name companies emailing me. But what I found out was it was all just very extremely competitive, extremely ugly, extremely coldhearted, not victim-centered, and it's an entertainment business. It is not journalism, and they do not care about the outcomes of these cases. They care about the dollar signs. And that is with every company that I was exposed to and every company that offered me money. Eric talked about exclusive agreements, and I thought that was just so weird because I personally would never go to a victim and say that they can only tell their story with me.

[00:05:52] **Eric Bland:** One time.

[00:05:53] **Mandy Matney:** One time. A victim's story is their everything. It's their currency. It's their ability to speak and advocate for themselves and go to whoever they want to. To stifle that so you can make money is disgusting. And that was something that I could not be a part of. The other thing that I just felt weird about and I could not participate in was as journalists, they hire you as a consultant but they really want to pay you to get victims to get behind the camera. But they can't pay victims to get behind the camera because that's unethical, according to them. They're the only ones that can make the money off of it.

[00:06:36] **Eric Bland:** They'll pay you if you can give them photos. I always get, well, if you give us photos or you can give us a tape or a document, then we can put a value on that, and it can be anything from zero to whatever. But as far as appearances, we don't pay for that because we want, you know, unscripted, objective type of journalists. We don't want you to give anything slanted, so. You know, I didn't have any knowledge of these things and I, you know, for the first time in my life, I was a fish outta water.

[00:07:08] **Liz Farrell:** No one does.



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[00:07:09] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah. And I have to say like a shout-out to UTA. They saved my life there. I thank God I was scooped up by a talent agency. And again, I thought like I didn't know anything about any of this. I thought like talent agencies would be the ones to just take all your money and take advantage of you. And David, David was my biggest advocate, and he took meetings with all these people when I didn't have time to. And David was the one that got us hooked up with UTA. It was like a friend of a friend of a friend. And they know what they're doing when it comes to negotiating and bullying these people back and making you get paid your worth. And at the end of the day, I mean, I would be open to do documentaries in the future, but the two ones that are gonna come out in the next month, I could not ethically be a part of.

[00:08:02] And the other thing about this HBO documentary, just a real quick story that like what's the moment that I was like, I can't do this. Yet David was basically my agent there for a couple months, just making phone calls with all these people. And David was on the phone with a couple of the like main guys, the big executive producers of the project. And David asked them, "So why do you want Mandy?" And he said, "I mean, I'll be honest with you. I just wanna take her off the market."

[00:08:33] **Eric Bland:** Wow.

[00:08:33] **Mandy Matney:** Which, like, yeah, as a woman woman who's dealt with like mentally abusive boyfriends like it just triggered me in all the wrong way. And I was just like, eff this. I'm out. I'm out. I don't care how much they're paying me. I can't do this. And then Liz said, Liz gave me the best advice in the world, which the podcast is the documentary. Go with it.

[00:08:57] **Eric Bland:** Well, I have a confession to make. And my confession is I'm probably, you know, Abraham Lincoln said anybody who represents themselves has a fool for a lawyer. So I thought, okay, I'm a great negotiator and, you know, I've been negotiating with my math for 35 years. If I told you what I sold my exclusivity for, you would say, "You should lose your law license." I mean, I'm just thoroughly embarrassed. They had me to believe that, and at the time, I mean, I was just a name. Nobody really knew outside of the legal circles who I was. So they're like, you can't command anything. You're nobody. This will get you out there. We will make you into somebody. I didn't have the



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advantage of having UTA and I had nobody. And so, you know, they said, well, we'll pay you \$2,000 more than we ordinarily would pay somebody who's a nobody. And I sold myself. I sold my birthright for a bowl of porridge per year. Yeah.

[00:10:05] **Mandy Matney:** They make you feel terrible. They make you feel so terrible about yourself. And that's where I was, too, of just being like, what if I'm ruining my career here by saying no to these people? What if I'm never gonna be able to be anybody because I said no?

[00:10:19] **Eric Bland:** Well, I'm thankful to you guys because Eric Bland would still be a nobody, even though I am a nobody, but you guys have given me a voice and a platform for the last year and. But for you guys in a couple, you know, 2020 *Good Morning America*, I would not be able to tell the story for my clients and what happened here because I signed stupidly an exclusivity that I should have never signed.

[00:10:44] **Mandy Matney:** And that, I mean, it's just, I just don't know how they can ever preach about ethics while also bullying victims into only telling their story with them. There is no way that anybody could —

[00:10:59] **Eric Bland:** It's not journalism. It's commerce. They're into commerce. You're into journalism. And there's that conflict there that they wanna make the most amount of money and say to the world, "I got Mandy. She's the exclusive. She can't go anywhere else." Or "I got Ginger Satterfield."

[00:11:20] **Mandy Matney:** "I got these victims." Like that's what they were trying to do. And it was like, this is so gross and I'm out.

[00:11:25] **Liz Farrell:** They're at the heart of a lot of problems that I think, looking back over the last year of like what stress was involved in covering the Murdaughs and covering all these cases, I think behind the scenes, the documentaries loomed larger than perhaps we even gave them credit for because as a result of Mandy, as a result of you turning those down, I feel like, you know, a lot of, I mean, frankly, slander was happening behind the scenes with you. And I think that it affected our relationships with, you know, certain people and not victims, not, you know, our sources who, you know, have known us and trust us, but certainly with other players in the game coming at



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us from, you know, just. I'll just say this, like over the past year, I probably fielded maybe 50 to 100 phone calls of the most ridiculous accusations. And they almost always, you know, went back to the same person who was involved with the documentary world. And even yesterday or this morning in Murdaugh Murders Podcast, we mentioned a video of Paul with the Blackout rifle. And that video was the source of, you know, drama because you had seen the video because of a personal relationship with a source.

[00:12:44] **Mandy Matney:** I'm not gonna sell it.

[00:12:44] **Liz Farrell:** And that was it. That was the only reason you saw it. It wasn't, you know, some big exclusive thing. And it turned into this. Yeah, exactly. And it's like, it's not ours. It's not ours to sell. It's not ours to talk about. It's not ours. Like you are simply being a human being.

[00:13:00] **Mandy Matney:** And it's ours to mention as important, relevant information to the case, but that's it.

[00:13:06] **Liz Farrell:** And with permission of the, with the permission. That's the thing that I think that, you know, people don't realize this. Yeah. You wanna be respectful.

[00:13:13] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah. And I think, yeah.

[00:13:15] **Eric Bland:** I'm gonna disclose something here I probably shouldn't, but I think you two should hear it. I actually was in possession of a tape of Alex Murdaugh. And I got it through lawful means and nobody really knows that it exists and I ended up transferring the rights to that tape to this organization that's working on a documentary. The world would've loved to have heard Alex's voice all along the way. You know, they heard that 911 calls from Gloria Satterfield. Obviously, the murder 911 call, as well as the roadside shooting. So they've heard Alex's words kind of three times. But this was a tape of him describing how he made the claim in connection with Gloria Satterfield's death. And it was, you know, valuable monetarily but also to educate the public on who he was and what his motives are. I should have never, ever transferred the IP to that to this company. And to this day, I regret it. And I just didn't have enough knowledge. But November is up. November 22 is here, so I



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can start talking about it. But you're right, Mandy, I learned a hard lesson. A hard lesson.

[00:14:30] **Mandy Matney:** And I think it's big of you to admit that. And that's the thing, too. I mean, and I would not be surprised by, I mean, the manipulation, the gaslighting. I have text messages from directors that people would not believe like. And the other thing that people need to realize is that it's so different. And like Liz talks about all of the slander that went on with me behind the scenes from. Because these people wanted to discredit me because I wasn't a part of their project, so they couldn't skip around that part where I exposed all of this in their documentary. So they instead, and they didn't wanna explain to people, go back to their bosses as to why they couldn't get me. And so instead, they tried to discredit me behind the scenes and it was really gross and disgusting. And, again, really.

[00:15:22] **Eric Bland:** Tear down what you covet.

[00:15:24] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah. And it was just, it just had a lot. It took a huge toll on my mental health. Liz was there for every step of the way, but like I'm really glad that I kept going because there was a lot of times when I was just like, I'm out. I wanted to say that because of all, I mean, it was just gross. And the thing that people have to realize is these producers — and not all of them. There's like, and I said this before, but one really nice HBO producer that was at my wedding 'cause she came with Sandy Smith. They became such good friends and that's great, and I loved how they treated Sandy. And Erin Lee Carr, also, I have to mention is a documentary producer who I love and she's a really great friend of mine. This isn't all of them. But a lot of them, they come into a town, they extract all this pain and grossness and live in these towns for six months.

[00:16:19] **Eric Bland:** Strip it like gold mining.

[00:16:20] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah. And they do not care who they destroy. They do not care. And they do not care that after their documentary comes out, a lot of them, not all, but they do not care what they make people feel like whereas Liz and I are gonna be in this until the end. We have to look victims in the eye and tell them, "This is what's happening." Blah, blah, blah. We live here.



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[00:16:44] **Eric Bland:** You live here. You're gonna be here forever. You're gonna see 'em at the grocery stores, you're gonna see 'em at functions. I mean, you can't strip people of their dignity or make them give something up and then walk by the next day and see them and act like nothing.

[00:16:58] **Mandy Matney:** And go back to New York. Yeah. And they all just go back to New York City and make their money. And it's gross. And like —

[00:17:05] **Liz Farrell:** Have we mentioned the part where they make fun of the place, too? I mean.

[00:17:08] **Mandy Matney:** "I'm only staying in Savannah because it's the only decent —" like get outta here. Just —

[00:17:13] **Eric Bland:** Or they make fun of us.

[00:17:14] **Mandy Matney:** Oh, yeah. The amount of like, "These country bumpkins."

[00:17:18] **Liz Farrell:** Yeah, exactly.

[00:17:19] **Eric Bland:** Or they call us "bloggers." They don't call you guys "journalists." They call me whatever they're gonna call me. But you, you know, quote unquote, "bloggers" never have gotten one thing wrong in anything having to do with Murdaugh. You never had to issue a retraction. Nothing you ever printed or you spoke about didn't happen or was wrong. And it's blowing traditional journalists wide open and minds wide open. Like how can these two women, you know, who had a modest background in journalism, local newspapers, working for the sheriff, how do they have these sources? How are they always right? Why are they breaking the story first? And so, what they do is they demean it or they're suggesting that we do something untoward to get the story.

[00:18:07] **Liz Farrell:** Right. That's true. And I will just say one last thing. I don't wanna belabor it too much but 'cause I do plan to watch the documentary. I think the biggest tell for me was when they were trying to get me to sign on, not HBO but the other guy, I feel like they went, they made it so personal and,



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you know, they get in your head and they start to say things, you know, that just simply stereotypical things that you hear about Hollywood in general, which is like, you know, you don't really like Mandy, do you? Like, you know, it's just like making, and I'm like, they don't understand that they're coming in on like a years-long friendship. Like not just a friendship but like a partnership where we, you know, had worked together and not, you know, this was a main source of what built that trust between us and, you know, understanding our working styles and stuff. So that just left a bad taste in my mouth from the very beginning. So the answer to them was always going to be "no." But I got to see it while they were, you know, working it. I got to see it from the inside and it just is sad.

[00:19:07] **Mandy Matney:** That's something that I've learned, that Liz and I have really learned with a lot, we call them "Hollywood people," "documentary people." They don't understand loyalty like at all. It is like a foreign concept to them.

[00:19:20] **Liz Farrell:** That's right. And that's so important to say, Mandy, because I think the loyalty issue is at the heart, too, of what, when we say, you know, this affected relationships and such, there were a lot of people who have changed significantly or whose, you know, terrible side got exposed I think largely because of the Hollywood aspect of this. But I think, you know, when it comes down to loyalty and like what our values are as friends, as partners, as journalists especially, we've never lost sight of that. Neither of us. So I'm proud of us. I'll just say that.

[00:19:53] **Mandy Matney:** These people are it's like, Liz and I got sent to HR together at McClatchy like. We'd been together for, we'd been through a lot of shit and.

[00:20:02] **Liz Farrell:** The only time I was sent to HR. I just wanna point that out.

[00:20:07] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah. I was sent many times, and we'll talk about that another time. Nothing for nothing bad. Liz can back me up on that. It was always just crap. But yeah. And then the other thing that I wanna say really quick before we move on is, I'm not talking about *20/20*, I'm not talking about *Dateline* here. I think the way that those shows operated was a lot



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different. I chose *20/20*, and I'm sure Eric could say the same thing. I chose to work with *20/20* 'cause I really liked the producers and they did not act like they were swooping into town to just extract people from their pain. Like one of the producers of *20/20* saw Sandy when she went to Florida and hung out with her. Like they are sweet. And I always, I judge people by how they treat Sandy.

[00:20:56] **Eric Bland:** *Dateline's* coming out Friday night with a two-hour special. It's a follow-up. It'll have some from the original. And I've kept in touch with Haylee Barber, who's one of the co-producers. And, you know, she's really invested in the Satterfield story. She came for the glorious gift ceremony. She's kept up with Sandy Smith. They have a real, genuine interest not only in the story, but in the people. They've developed personal relationships. And I'll get a phone call and she'll ask me about my daughter in her surgical residency. So there is a qualitative difference between the documentary people and then the news people.

[00:21:43] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah. And I just don't want people to confuse that. Like there was never money offered on the table with *20/20*. They just do things way different and way closer to journalism than these big-time documentary, news magazine is I guess the term. So yeah. That was really good to get all that out there, by the way.

[00:22:04] **Liz Farrell:** I was gonna say that was cathartic.

[00:22:07] **Mandy Matney:** It really was.

[00:22:07] **Liz Farrell:** I didn't actually think that that conversation was gonna go in that direction, but I do. I'm so glad that we were able to talk about that because I think that, especially on social media, I don't think that people always understand where we're coming from or what the history of those relationships is. And I think now, you know, I'm glad that that's all out there.

[00:22:25] **Mandy Matney:** I don't want us to sound bitter, just one last thing. I know that people have been like, "Mandy and Liz just wanted to be the Mandy and Liz show and nobody else." No. We want as many people exposing this as possible. But we want everybody to do it the right way, and we will call them out if they're not doing it the right way.



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[00:22:43] **Liz Farrell:** And the right way being with integrity, with integrity and adhering to, you know, ethics. Exactly. And that's it. That's bottom line. We'll be right back.

[00:23:03] We probably should have talked about how exciting it is that Carmen Mullen is finally getting held accountable by the Supreme Court. Isn't that amazing, guys?

[00:23:10] **Mandy Matney:** Oh, I missed that.

[00:23:10] **Eric Bland:** Yeah. Me, too.

[00:23:11] **Liz Farrell:** I'm just kidding. I'm just kidding. Nothing's happened. Eric, what are you hearing on the street up in Columbia?

[00:23:20] **Eric Bland:** I'm hearing people are starting to move in a direction that I didn't expect, which is really starting to question Judge Mullen's judgment, really what is the Supreme Court doing? You know, I'm disappointed but not surprised that we haven't heard anything. It's, you know, our system is a dark system. Our process is a closed process, so I don't know if anything is happening. I know that I received a letter that said it would be assigned to somebody. It would really do the public some good and do the justice system some good if a statement was released to say, "We received the complaints against Carmen Mullen and they are being looked into." That's all they have to say, something like that. Just something to give us hope that we have a system where people take it seriously. Look, they'll suspend a lawyer, Liz and Mandy, at the drop of a hat. And when I tell you if it's a DUI, God forbid, or if it's a domestic violence situation, your ticket the next day is pulled. You're surrendering it temporarily. They do it to magistrate judges. And again, I'm not advocating that anything happen to Judge Mullen. But I think it's time that we have a system that has sunlight and light in it like Georgia does and that it's not just other judges or legislatures looking into it but it maybe be a blue ribbon committee of legislators, lawyers, and citizens that would judge somebody's conduct in the situation of Judge Mullen. And then the public would then have more confidence that it's being done equally. Remember, we're all about everybody drinking from the same cup of justice. That's why we started this podcast. And it seems like lawyers drink from a different cup of justice than judges do. The judges who are accused of doing improper



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things need to participate in a system where it's open and she needs due process. She has the right to defend herself. But we as the public need confidence to know it's being handled. And don't just tell me, "Trust us." We're done trusting. The "trust us" anymore is over.

[00:25:40] **Liz Farrell:** Oh, yeah. That's over.

[00:25:40] **Mandy Matney:** It's way over. Yeah. And Alex wasn't an outlier. Like I think they need to stop being like, Alex was the one that just slipped through the cracks. And it's like, no. This is a system of problems because there's no transparency and because all we're left to wonder, we all have to assume at this point that they just hope that we stop talking about it and everybody moves on. The point of keeping this alive is because we need to show them that that is not happening.

[00:26:12] **Liz Farrell:** One of the things that I think became clear, even more clear to me over the past week since we revealed all that, the ones that are the holdouts that are saying like, well, she was helping Ernie the attorney, I think it's more clear to me after listening to the tapes that this wasn't about Ernie as much it was about her relationship with her friend Moose. And that's important because this goes back to judges and their motivations in helping friends and such. So I hope that the Supreme Court or somebody who's friends with any member of the Supreme Court is listening to this because that needs to be driven home. This isn't, you know, that excuse is great. Like you were help, you wanted to help a guy. That's fine. But the person you were helping wasn't the person at that house. The person you were helping was your friend in your circle on Hilton Head Island. And that person has, you know, a certain amount of influence and a certain amount of power. So that's all I wanted to say about that.

[00:27:04] **Eric Bland:** Is there any more to this story, Liz? Do you think we'll hear more from the Beaufort County Sheriff's Department, even the deputy himself whose character was impugned?

[00:27:14] **Liz Farrell:** I think, ultimately, from what I'm hearing people, there's a different buzz in the air because this is unavoidable. There's just really no option but to hold her accountable, in my opinion. As far as, you know, the sheriff's office, I don't know if Moore's gonna come out. But, you know, I would



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be interested to know if she, you know, tried to mitigate this in any way. Like, what did she do?

[00:27:34] **Eric Bland:** What do you mean about that? What do you mean about that?

[00:27:37] **Liz Farrell:** Like in 2017, she had to have known that this was gonna end up on camera and in a report. Did she do anything, you know? Did she try to stop that from coming out in any way? So I hope that investigators with the ODC or Supreme Court or whoever, you know, will definitely ask that question because I find it hard to believe that she would just let that happen or have that happen and not wake up the next day and be like, "Hm. I wonder if that's gonna be written down."

[00:28:03] **Eric Bland:** Sounds like you had a bee in your ear buzzing. Is that what I'm hearing, possibly?

[00:28:08] **Liz Farrell:** I, you know, sometimes in journalism when you have a bee buzzing in your ear and you can't definitively say something, you just say, "I certainly hope that people are looking into this." Yeah. "I wonder."

[00:28:18] **Eric Bland:** I wonder.

[00:28:19] **Liz Farrell:** Yeah. I wonder. So we have the trial coming up in Charleston next week, assuming that the trial's going to come forward or go forward. And it's the federal trial, US versus Russell Lucius Laffitte. And going back to what Mandy said about Alex Murdaugh being not the only guy. He didn't slip through the system here. He wasn't, you know, the shining example. I mean, he might be the shining example of corruption, but he's certainly not a solitary actor here. But there were a lot of filings this week in the case, especially from the defense. And it seems like they are about to take a match to a gasoline-soaked building right now because Eric, did you get a chance to read that one motion referring to what's called now the "Harris Report"? Russ Laffitte is saying that, apparently, when all this stuff started to come out and everyone was panicking, the bank hired an attorney named Greg Harris to put together a report.

[00:29:34] **Eric Bland:** Good friend of mine.



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[00:29:34] **Liz Farrell:** Yeah, I wanna hear about this guy. But he, so what Greg Harris did, he's a former federal prosecutor, and he put together a report that assesses, I believe, the criminality from what it sounds like, the potential criminality or the criminal exposure that PSB had in particular with the \$680,000 check or at least references that. And it sounds like they might have interviewed people with PMPED or certainly lots of people with the board. I don't have to reread that. But it sounds to me like they're willing to take it all down. But first, why don't you tell me about Greg Harris first?

[00:30:11] **Eric Bland:** Greg's a good friend of mine. He is an excellent attorney, but he's a 100% criminal attorney. So that should clue everybody in that this bank was concerned not only about the criminal behavior of Russ Laffitte but of the criminal behavior of the enterprise itself. Those four walls of the bank that you talk about that they're taking a flame to. You know, Liz, I was wondering when we were at that bond hearing, I remember I told you, I said, "Hey, that's my friend Greg Harris. I wonder what he was doing here." And it didn't dawn on me until last night when you sent me those reports. I saw the Harris Report. I was thinking, is this *The Valachi Papers*? Who's Harris? And then I saw Greg Harris, and I said, Oh my goodness, now I'm putting the dots together. And I don't think, Liz, that they were just looking at the \$680,000 joint transaction that was done with PMPED to replenish that client account that was raided. I think Greg was doing something a lot larger and broader. I think he was looking at systemic transactions and systemic ways of doing business. So I don't think the Harris Report is just limited to the 680. I think it's a bigger, more descriptive report.

[00:31:29] **Liz Farrell:** I should mention this about the Harris Report. Russell wants it introduced, it sounds like, because there's something in there that he feels like is going to exonerate him. And I think that's interesting. I know that it sounds like with the \$680,000 check, and this goes back to what we were talking about in an earlier episode about the super secret tapes, it sounds like, you know, Russell's saying that he had the board's approval to pay PMPED for that half of the \$1.36 million that was stolen from Arthur Badger. Now, speaking of Badger, the Harris Report, when I was reading it, that was the first thing that came to mind was like this Harris Report is something I'm gonna guarantee that Mark Tinsley, who is representing Arthur Badger, is probably gonna want considering what kind of information is in it. But right now, it seems like the bank is fighting the release of it —



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[00:32:22] **Eric Bland:** Based on two doctrines. They're attorney-client privilege doctrine and the work-product privilege doctrine. The attorney-client privilege is a harder privilege to pierce. The work-product privilege is a little bit easier. Work-product only is the bank knows that it's in a situation where it's a target, whether it's in civil litigation or criminal, and they hire an attorney who decides through his mental impressions, I want to do some kind of investigation or some kind of work, and I'm gonna tell the bank to assemble things for me, and I'm gonna write a report. That's work-product, but it also contains his mental impressions, which makes it attorney-client privilege.

[00:33:04] The attorney-client privilege is almost inviolate. It's very difficult to break into that privilege. It can be done one of three ways: waiver, where the client who owns the privilege and the client, PSB, is the only one that can waive that privilege, agrees to waive it. Russell argues that that's already been waived because they gave the report to law enforcement and they gave it to the FDIC, the governing federal agency that regulates back. So they argued first we get the report 'cause you already waived it. You gave it away. The second thing they argue is, well, there's an implied waiver, meaning that, well, you gave it to Russell. Russell knows about it. He's entitled to it. And he needs it to exonerate himself and present a defense. The third, which is the most difficult, is the crime-fraud exception, which says you brought an attorney in, you brought this lawyer in to kind of put that cloak of attorney-client privilege around it to keep it secret when really all it is is it's the bank trying to commit a fraud, get away with it, and then keep it silent. And they've argued that the bank is part of a crime-fraud that would let the court order the production of the Harris Report because the attorney-client privilege is being used as a shield to shield criminal conduct.

[00:34:34] And so, Russell Laffitte, believe it or not, against his own family bank is arguing the bank is committing crimes and frauds. This is the former president, CEO, saying, chief executive officer, "This bank commits crime and fraud." So the first thing I did today, believe it or not, when I woke up, thank you for sending me that, is I did the same document request in the Plyler lawsuit and sent out asking for the same thing. Learned about the Harris Report.

[00:35:06] **Liz Farrell:** You did?



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[00:35:06] **Eric Bland:** Yes, it was gold. And I'm not kidding you, we parroted exactly what Russell Laffitte asked for. The FDIC documents, the watch reports, the audit reports — every single thing.

[00:35:17] **Liz Farrell:** That is wild. Now, I have heard several times that there are at least more than, there's more than two dozen victims, people that we don't even know the names of right now. And on top of that, there are rules of professional conduct that you have to follow when it comes to malpractice, meaning that if something happens at your practice, you can't just tell like, we're gonna, we'll solve this. Here's a check. Now, go on your way. This problem's over. What are some of the things that you have to do for your client, you know, by the rules?

[00:35:50] **Eric Bland:** Exactly. So the rules prevent me from putting my interest at any time over the client's interest. So if I discover that I've done something wrong, whether I've missed a statute of limitations or I missed a filing of an answer in the 30-day time period and it causes damage to the client, I have a duty immediately to come clean and advise that client. And I can't negotiate my own fix with the client. I have to tell the client, "I am no longer your attorney that you can trust is giving you 100% unvarnished advice that doesn't help me personally." I have to advise you you need to get another attorney, believe it or not, who can advise you, is what I'm saying to you in your best interest or is there any of it that's really in Eric's best interest? So if I'm gonna say to you, hey, Liz. It's my fault. I cost you your ability to file this lawsuit and you are gonna recover X dollars. I'll give you \$30,000." It's my duty to say. Well, before you take that \$30,000, you gotta go get independent counsel, and I need to talk to them because they're gonna say, you know what? \$30,000 isn't enough, Eric, because when you wrote your demand letter to the other side, you said the case was worth \$500,000.

[00:37:23] And now, bringing it back home to PMPED, they would just send out checks to Client A. Client A, we've discovered that Alex took a certain amount of money from you. So he took a hundred thousand dollars from you, but you would've had to pay us a 40% legal fee. So here's the check for \$60,000. And so, they say, you know, you don't get your legal fee, but we'll give you 60. And they made voluntary payments. And, evidently, in their arguments they were saying, well, we can use the fact that we paid you and then you negotiated the check. That released us of liability. That is not the case. Just because you made payment to somebody doesn't mean the



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obligations are released. But what they didn't do, thank God they didn't send the payment with a release agreement. But what they didn't do is tell the people before you accept that payment and negotiate the check, we're gonna try to make an argument that that's a release you need to get independent counsel. So what's gonna end up happening is there's gonna be arguments from some people, and I'm part of it that, well, thank you for making that little downpayment deposit against that case, but that's not the end-all and be-all.

[00:38:40] **Liz Farrell:** Okay. So on Monday, Russell filed a response to Palmetto State Bank's refusal to turn over. They wanna quash the Harris Report and the secret tapes. And in that motion or, sorry, that response, there's something very interesting. But I'm just gonna read it real quick here.

[00:38:59] It says, "Because the bank may have been facilitating a fraud committed by Peters Murdaugh on its client, the crime-fraud exception applies. As explained in its previous briefing and exhibits provided to the court, the \$680,000 that is referenced in count four of the indictment was a payment to reimburse a Peters Murdaugh client for funds stolen by Alex Murdaugh. Unlike a normal settlement, however, Peters Murdaugh could not get such a release from its client without having the client engage independent counsel" — as you just said — "so the bank relied on counsel at Peters Murdaugh to seek a de facto release through payment similar to how Peters Murdaugh had treated other firm clients who had lost money."

[00:39:44] So does this, Eric, does this mean that Russell, in addition to going after Palmetto State Bank and saying that they were, you know, perpetuating a crime or part of a crime, this is a sign that they're going after PMPED, right?

[00:39:57] **Eric Bland:** Well, yeah. He's saying what PMPED did was violate the rules of professional conduct and abuse their fiduciary relationships with their client. PMPED gave some of the money along with the PMPED money with PSB, they put it together, each put in 680, and then they gave it to the client without telling the client "Go get independent counsel. We need to actually sit down with you." Remember, if I'm going to come clean, I have to totally come clean. So did they sit down with those clients together? PSB, did PSB say what was our role if it was the Arthur Badger money was stolen. Did PMPED sit down with the client and say "This was our role" in what



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happened? And you can't just give little bits and pieces. You can't cut around the edges.

[00:40:51] **Liz Farrell:** Why do you think people haven't come up against PMPED as hard as they maybe could have up until this point? Like, you know, I get why Russell has been federally indicted. I get why he's, you know, facing several state counts. But why is PMPED like why have they been spared? Mandy, do you have any thoughts on that?

[00:41:12] **Mandy Matney:** Well, something that we have to remember, Carra Henderson, who is the daughter of Danny Henderson, works kind of in the US Attorney's Office. Is she in the US Attorney's Office? 'Cause she has that weird in-between job.

[00:41:27] **Liz Farrell:** So Danny Henderson is a partner — Yeah. We should say this. So Danny Henderson is a partner. Yeah.

[00:41:33] **Mandy Matney:** So there's a PMPED, there's a big PMPED connection at the US Attorney's Office, let's put it that way.

[00:41:39] **Liz Farrell:** That's the way to say that. Yes, there is. And this person is, so Danny Henderson's daughter, and we've mentioned her before, she is a liaison for the US Attorney's Office. So she doesn't work for the US Attorney. She works for the 14th Circuit, which as we know is Murdaugh country all day long. So a very interesting decision on the part of Duffie Stone years ago was to put this person, Carra Henderson, as the liaison for the US Attorney's Office ostensibly to help the circuit to, you know, give the full force of the law for certain crimes that were happening within the 14th Circuit. But the alternate take on that is that Carra was put in her position to be the eyes and ears, whether she was realizing it or not, for PMPED because I think we've seen a lot of evidence, over the last year especially, of that relationship benefiting PMPED to a certain extent. So that is one of the questions that we raised in an MMP episode, which is, you know, is Russell, certainly you and I have our opinions on Russell, that said, you know, when we're looking at the grand spectrum of things, PMPED reigns large, right? So Mandy, are you excited to sort of see Russell maybe turn a corner here and be the one to take on, I hope to take on PMPED, maybe? Maybe I'm reading too much into this, but.



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[00:43:06] **Mandy Matney:** I'll just say this. If we're gonna sit in a two-week trial, I hope that someone else gets exposed besides Russell. We all know where Russell is in this. We all know he's probably not gonna be able to get out of all of these charges. However, what will be interesting and what most people close to this have been kind of so curious about and waiting for is where does PMPED fit in all of this? And will they be held accountable if we find out that they were involved in a lot of shady stuff, too? And it does seem like PMPED has a big network of people protecting them, including the ODC, the South Carolina Supreme Court. With the stuff that I heard that went down last fall with how they were trying to clean up Alex's mess, I'll just put it this way. I'm very shocked that not a single other attorney besides Alex has at least been suspended pending an investigation. And I don't know. I'm just very eager and I think that this case next week could be very big. And I think a lot of people are kind of keeping one eye open at night in the next couple weeks worried about being exposed.

[00:44:35] **Eric Bland:** Look. If history's prologue, this is certainly gonna be an explosive trial. I think it's gonna be explosive. I think Russ is, you know, whether he gets convicted or not, I think he wants the world to know that he was not in this alone. You know, Justin Bamberg and I and, to a lesser extent, Glenn Waters now, we've sued PMPED in court. You know, we have alleged publicly and in our pleadings that there was a lack of oversight, that subordinates of Alex knew, his paralegals and people in the accounting department, knew what was going on. So we gave a roadmap to anybody that wanted to look into PMPED, you know, from a regulatory or ODC standpoint to ask the right questions. But I think PMPED is, Russ is gonna say some things in there. I think it's gonna come out that he's loaned money to lawyers in PMPED other than Alex. I don't know that for sure, but I think it's gonna be an enlightening two-week trial.

[00:45:37] **Liz Farrell:** Mandy and I will often, or at least, we haven't said it in a while, but certainly in the early stages of looking into the Murdaugh stuff, is you can't find what you don't look for. So if the FBI and SLED are treating PMPED with kid gloves for whatever reason, we hope that stops, of course. But still, I'm not quite understanding why PMPED has the influence that they do in general. Eric, do you wanna speak to that?

[00:46:06] **Eric Bland:** It's like taking on Notre Dame. I mean, they're a citadel. They have a golden dome, you know? It's not easy to take on Notre Dame. It's



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not easy to take on, you know, a law firm and a dynasty of a hundred years. And I certainly understand the reticence of people. Look, the fact that Ronnie and I and maybe two other people are the only people in South Carolina that are willing to sue other lawyers, can you imagine what it would take to take down a citadel of a law firm like PMPED?

[00:46:37] **Mandy Matney:** I think when you peel back the layers of how did Alex Murdaugh become Alex Murdaugh and how did he get so cocky and to the point where he was, and how did he get so comfortable with sloppily stealing millions of dollars and as a lawyer. I think if we really wanna restore faith in the justice system and if we really wanna restore faith in lawyers in South Carolina, Alex's law firm has to be held accountable in some way.

[00:47:15] **Eric Bland:** Yeah. I mean, can we just not, yeah, can we just talk about the 10,000-pound elephant, finally? This isn't some sophisticated scheme where it was working through Singapore and money was getting transferred to Switzerland and to Germany. He used the name "Forge," which was "Forge Consulting." He did it in his bank that was 50 yards from his law office. I mean, there were checks that weren't going to clients. I mean, you know, anybody who's in Auditing 101 would've figured this out. You used the best term that I've heard in so long. "Sloppily" stole money. This is not high-grade, high mountain stealing. It's low-grade stealing. Anybody could have discovered it.

[00:48:01] **Mandy Matney:** That takes me back, Eric, to like the one of the first conversations that we had when you got all the documents in the Satterfield case and you emailed me and you were just, it was like super late at night and you were walking me through it. We were both just like, oh my God, this is like.

[00:48:18] **Eric Bland:** Yeah. It's not, it's not high —

[00:48:20] **Mandy Matney:** For millions of dollars? Like think about all of the things that people do to steal, that add up to stealing millions of dollars. And this guy just made this Forge account. But at the end of the day, it is not enough to hear PMPED say "Oopsies. We missed that." No. And we'll be right back.



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[00:48:49] **Eric Bland:** Can I ask you two these questions? I want you to answer. Do you believe that Alex did this in a way that no one in his firm knew what was going on? Liz?

[00:49:04] **Liz Farrell:** No. I think they would have to be willfully blind, and that goes for right from the assistant to the accountant, who I believe is even related to Susie, like she's, I think that their CFO is related to Russell Laffitte.

[00:49:23] **Mandy Matney:** Russell's sister-in-law. I think it's Russell's sister-in-law.

[00:49:26] **Liz Farrell:** Yeah, it is. It's Russell's sister-in-law. So I think, yeah, you look at all of that, you look at the, you know, right down the paralegals. And that's not to cast dispersions necessarily on them but to say that like their roles, you can't, again, you can't find what you don't look for. And.

[00:49:41] **Eric Bland:** Just so it's clear, I'm not advocating that PMPED be sanctioned or prosecuted, that attorneys get sanctioned or prosecuted. But people need to understand how this happened and educate the bar so that it never happens again. This needs to be a life lesson for lawyers here.

[00:50:02] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah, exactly. And I mean, at the end of the day, if you were that willfully blind that your own partner was able to get away with all of this, should you be a lawyer? Like if you're that bad and if you miss that much, how can you say that you can look out for your clients? And I just don't think that you can do both.

[00:50:30] **Eric Bland:** Oh, you can, in all fairness, that you have a law firm of 20 people and lawyers who are representing their clients. And like I've said all along, there are some really great lawyers in that law firm, I mean. And a lot of times these lawyers are trusting their accounting department. You know, they're not gonna go, they don't have the time to go behind every single settlement that Alex does. But the accounting department does, and the accountants, outside accountants, and the CFO of a law firm does. I don't wanna put that burden on the lawyers. But you have to have a structure in place that there is double entry accounting and checking behind the checker. So like I say, trust and verify. I trust everybody except the devil inside



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everybody. And if you have a good, safe organization with that mentality, you'll never lose money.

[00:51:25] **Liz Farrell:** I noticed that there was a sealed motion that was filed yesterday in this case and a lot of actions surrounding whatever the sealed motion is. And, apparently, whatever it is, they're going to hear it on Monday before the trial starts. So, Eric, have you seen, I don't know what this motion is, but have you seen a sealed motion this close to like, I guess on the eve of the indictments, I guess? I don't know how to say it.

[00:51:56] **Eric Bland:** It can mean only one of two things: that there was some type of prosecutorial misconduct which infected the indictments against Russell or two, that there has been something that's being done by third parties that impedes Russell's ability to confront witnesses at trial, properly cross-examine him and advance his constitutional right of I am not guilty until, you know, you prove my guilt or innocent until not guilty. I think in this particular case, it's explosive. Russell certainly has a right to defend himself and what the analysis that Judge Gergel's gonna do on Monday is he's gonna one, he's always has in the forefront, boy, that attorney-client privilege has a lot of good steel walls around it. Am I really gonna be the judge that wants to open that up? Okay, before I open it up, are there other ways that Russell can prove what he's trying to prove or advance what he's trying to prove without me giving him the Harris Report? Are there witnesses that can come forward that aren't privileged witnesses that could testify to what was said in a particular meeting if an attorney wasn't there? So Richard Gergel, Judge Richard Gergel is gonna explore other ways of trying to get to that same point. If it comes down to, though, there's no other way to prove it, there's no other way to get it other than letting 'em see the Harris Report, what is gonna happen is they're gonna produce the Harris Report to Judge Gergel. Judge Gergel, what's called "in camera" or "in chambers," is going to read that report. And he's going to, you know, the lawyers are gonna say, it's explosive, it's dynamite, it's earth-shattering. It's Dick Harpootlian saying, "I'm gonna show you who the killer is." And then Judge Gergel may read it and it may be a dud, and he may then say, sure. Turn it over. Or if it is highly explosive, he's going to have to balance Russell's rights to defend himself properly, the bank's right to hold a privilege, and also the government's right to continue to prove Russell's guilt. So he's got a Solomon job. I don't envy him. He's gonna make sad people or enemies out of a number of people when he makes his decision. But I have a feeling the Harris Report is gonna end up coming in in



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one shape, form, or another. And once that Harris Report's released, Mark Tinsley's gonna be doing skips down his street in front of his office, and Eric Bland and Ronnie Richter are gonna also be pretty excited.

[00:54:45] I want to end on some personal good cheer. One, I want to give a shout-out to the Phillies that seem to be doing great. The Eagles are doing great. And I also want to give a little shout-out to everybody without putting my own personal spin on it. Tuesday's coming up. Get out and vote. Vote your conscience.

[00:55:03] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah, absolutely. And vote for the person, not for the party. That's my thing. One little thing I wanted to mention that a lot of people have asked me and it's hard to explain. So covering this trial is going to be very tricky because of the federal law of not being able to, of journalists not being able to use basically any technology in the courtroom. So we cannot record, we cannot bring in our cellphones, we cannot live tweet. So it's going to be extremely tricky, but we're going to do our best. We're gonna get the best note-takers. And this is gonna be a challenge for us, but. And it's very stupid. Just gonna point that out. It is so stupid. It is 2022. Let's allow cameras in the courtroom. Transparency, transparency, transparency.

[00:56:06] **Outro:** This Cup of Justice bonus episode of the Murdaugh Murders Podcast is created and hosted by me, Mandy Matney, with co-host Liz Farrell, our executive editor, and Eric Bland, attorney-at-law, AKA The Jackhammer of Justice. From Luna Shark Productions.