



EPISODE 25: Taking On The Firm - Part One

Mandy Matney 0:01

I don't know exactly what role Alex Murdaugh's law firm played in his alleged crimes. But we're hearing some disturbing accounts about how P M P E D is allegedly handling the victims and it's important that we peel back the layers of accountability as this case keeps expanding. My name is Mandy Matney, I'm a local journalist who has been investigating the Murdaugh family for almost three years now. This is the Murdaugh martyrs podcast with David Moses and Liz Farrell.

As you know, we are a mission driven podcast, we expose the truth wherever it leads. While accomplishing this mission. We always take care to respect victims and we are sensitive to the traumatic nature of the story. We are also sensitive to our fans, many of whom have requested m&p merchandise, and we believe that we found a great way to accomplish both of these goals. We are so excited to announce today that pre sales for Murdaugh murders podcast merch is now live at [Murdaugh murders podcast.com/merch](https://Murdaughmurderspodcast.com/merch). All net proceeds from merchandise sales are donated to victim focus charities like [hopeful horizons](https://www.hopefulhorizons.org/) and others on a regular rotation. [Hopeful Horizons](https://www.hopefulhorizons.org/) is a Children's Advocacy, domestic violence and rape crisis center. I believe in this charity. Together, we can create safer communities by changing the culture of violence and offering a path to healing for victims. Check out [Murdaugh murders podcast.com/merch](https://Murdaughmurderspodcast.com/merch) and shop the first flight of products or let us know what products and organizations you'd like to see here. And as always, we encourage you to subscribe to [FITSnews.com](https://www.FITSnews.com) for the latest updates in the case and best news in South Carolina. But now you can also follow the Murdaugh MERS podcasts on Instagram and Facebook for alerts on the case the podcast and our team including Luna click the links in the description or search for Murdaugh murders podcast on your favorite platform. Previously on The Murdaugh motors podcast we told you about how Alex Murdaugh is accused of stealing more than 6.2 million related to his fake forge accounts at Bank of America dating back to 2016. He's accused of stealing millions of dollars from clients while he was a partner at the law firm started by his great grandfather P M P E. D. But so far PMP Ed has escaped accountability for the most part, while P and P ie D partners have been claiming to make Alex's victims whole it appears like something else was happening behind the scenes and today I'm going to introduce you all to a new voice for victims in this case Attorney Justin Bamberg. He was one of the first lawmakers I met when I started my job at FITSnews. Earlier this year I wrote a profile about Justin and his dad when his father was sworn in as the first African American sheriff and Bamber County, South Carolina being in Broward County, where Justin is from is just North Hampton County. Its



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small, rural and poor, just like Hampton County. Justin is also a state representative for the district that includes Moselle, and he brings a different perspective to this case as a whole because of his roots in rural South Carolina.

Justin Bamberg 3:52

If you grew up, over in this neck of the woods, or this part of the state, you've been familiar with the Murdaugh family, you've been familiar with that particular law firm. And it's something that kind of been around for a very, very long time. And in general, when you live in rural South Carolina, almost everything is institutionalized. The concept of new is not something you see here very often. Usually, if it's a doctor, that doctor was the doctor for your parents, if it's a law firm, that law firm was the law firm for one of your elders before you kind of know how this part of the state has been. If you were in Hampton, it was the firm's and that's what people referred to them as a firm. The reputation was one where I mean they would win, they would win, folks compensation. Hampton County has always been a bad venue to get sued in if you were a defendant or a company much like most of these towns. He's, you know, we don't have much over here. One thing that we have consistently had is people here are hardworking. They're good, honest folks. And they've had to effectively fight for everything that they've had in life. And people do not like companies that take advantage of folks or injure folks. What we're kind of seeing here is a firm and a family in the Murdaugh or Alex Murdaugh, who have for years, been on that side, you know, fighting against these companies. And now it turns out that people are at this point having to fight back against them. And they are in the position that some of the other defendants had been in that they've gone after 400 years or so.

Liz Farrell 5:46

Things are coming full circle for PMPED long ago, the firm staked out its own corner of the earth in Hampton County. Its brick building stands in stark contrast to every other structure within miles of it. It is large and formidable. It is the quote house that CSX built, which is a reference to the millions the firm made in suing the railroad company. PMPED has been at the helm for generations cultivating a reputation of absolute unavailability like kings in their castle. Even now, the firm seems to be regarded as a legitimate second government of Hampton County. They have been punishers and heroes, saviors and fixers if you want help you go to them, they get results. They have spent decades projecting the image that they are right there standing by the side of regular folks, protecting them from the bad guys from the people who seek to take advantage of them. So many people feel they owe the firm and its individual attorneys their loyalty, but there are two sides to the firm's



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generosity. Hampton County has been called a judicial hellhole and is known for fixed juries judges friendly to plaintiffs outside settlements and jury awards, chasing businesses and job opportunities away. This has helped people individually but has also been seen as playing a major role in holding back the county as a whole. Hampton county is impoverished. There's virtually no industry there, which means a good portion of the population was troubled an hour and a half in some cases on stuffy crowded buses to work on the coast, the same coast that serves as a weekend playground for many of the firm's attorneys. Now for the first time, the firm is finding itself on the other side of the courtroom. And the question is being asked: were they the real bad guys all along?

Mandy Matney 7:29

Justin Bamburgh got involved in this case earlier this month when a man by the name of Johnny Bush called him Bush was one of six victims named in the December indictments against Alex Murdaugh Bush suffer catastrophic injuries in a vehicle accident in 2016, and hired Murdaugh to represent him in June 2016 Alex Murdaugh allegedly told his client, Johnny Bush, that he had spent \$100,000 of a settlement money on accident reconstruction for Bush's case. Instead, Murdaugh had a check written for \$95,000 to his own fake forge account for his personal use.

Justin Bamberg 8:10

I've been keeping up with everything that's been going on and it's been absolutely crazy. I have been following the work that you've done and fist news as has been doing since the beginning, in terms of putting information out to people. So I was well aware of what was transpiring. I did not know how deep this particular aspect went. And I ended up getting a call about some missing money and kind of asking certain questions and finding out exactly what's going on trying to get your feet up on to you. And it really was mind boggling. And it started with one and then it led to another call and another call of people who had certain experiences with the office, not just in Alex Murdaugh, misappropriating and stealing money, and that's where the misconception is, I think for a lot of people who may be be looking at what's going on. Alex, stealing people's money is one thing. These are things that have transpired afterwards, that in reality has very little to do with what Allie did.

Mandy Matney 9:23

When Justin started digging and asking questions. He noticed something was really wrong here with the way he was hearing that victims were being treated by P MP Ed attorneys.



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Justin Bamberg 9:36

And what we saw is, for example, with Mr. Bush, his money got taken five years ago. And when it comes to light by law enforcement, hey, Mr. Bush, you know, you're owed another \$95,000. He goes and he's able to get that back. But that doesn't make anybody hold. And I've said this time and time again. If I went to a bank, and I said I want to borrow money to purchase a home, and Mr. Banker man, you're going to give me \$95,000. And I'm going to pay you back when I want at 0% interest, they're going to call security and have me escorted out because they're gonna think that I've lost my mind. And that is what has been going on.

Liz Farrell 10:25

I think most of us can agree that Alex's former clients deserve to receive interest on the money he allegedly stole from them. Honestly, this should go without saying, this shouldn't even be a conversation at this point. Especially not when Alex defense attorneys attempted to make their client free by capitalizing on the good optics of making victims whole at his bond hearing earlier this month. But along with the matter of making victims whole by accounting for factors like inflation and interest, there's another important consideration here. And that is the basic business of life. Every day. Alex's former clients have made critical decisions and their lives based on not having their settlement money, whether it was \$95,000 or a million dollars. People make very different decisions when they don't have the security of knowing there's money in the bank. If Alex did what He's accused of doing. He not only robbed these people of their money, he also stole an uncountable number of life choices from them, decisions about medical care, employment, vehicle repairs, childcare, education, relationships, all of these things are affected by our financial status, all of them. So if he did this, and if PNP Ed is making it worse by trying to limit damage to the firm, then we wouldn't call that quote making victims whole. I want to go back to volunteering again for a second because it's important to note that Alex attorneys Dick carpetland, and Jim Griffin indicated to the judge that 10 of the 12 victims who have been named in the indictment so far, had been made whole. And yet here we are now talking about some of the same victims who have sought representation because they do not believe they were made whole. That is quite a discrepancy. One thing that is encouraging though, is that law enforcement appears to be on its game when it comes to letting former clients of Alex know they might be one of his victims.

Mandy Matney 12:20

We'll be right back. On December 16, Justin dropped a press release where he pretty much went for the jugular in his news release Justin attacked the good ol boy



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system that enabled Alex Murdaugh's bad behavior. He said Murdaugh, literally P and P E deed people's pockets, asked victims to email him at p MP Ed my pockets at Bamburgh legal.com.

Liz Farrell 12:53

The funny thing here is that lawyers across the state who are familiar with PMPED are incredibly careful and what they say about the firm publicly PMPED holds a lot of authority. And frankly, there's a crazy amount of reverence paid to them to the point that attorneys outside the firm will even go to the firm to get the partners blessings before pursuing cases that could be across interests. Since the murders of Maggie and Paul and throughout this past fall, the whispers among attorneys and those in the legal field were loud, but not too loud. What Justin did here, it might be hard for people outside the state to understand just how bold of a move it was. He not only told the victims in the state that he was willing to go up against the great and almighty firm, he sort of did the unspeakable on his press release by openly using the let's call it alternative pronunciation of PMPED which is pimped, pimped people's pockets. And then he created a dang email address for it.

Justin Bamberg 13:48

people's access to justice or being made whole people's access to having someone fight for them should not be contingent on who's on the other side. And there are individuals in that office that, you know, I I know, I respect this is about the entity. And this is about the fact that people were done wrong. There's an underlying context associated with the practice of law, in my opinion, that is hanging in the balance here. And South Carolina has been known as a little boy state for a very long time. I mean, that doesn't matter whether you're talking law, politics or what and I've never really been in the good old boy system here. It is what it is. At the end of the day, Alex Murdaugh was a member of the firm, he presumptively put money up to help fund the operations of the firm and quite frankly, the firm profited from Alex Miss beads. They're on the hook here.

Mandy Matney 15:04

What Bamburgh is saying here, the PMPED profited from Alex's misdeeds. That is a big deal. Justin isn't messing around. He's going where other attorneys haven't really gone before, up against a law firm that has been feared by folks in this region for decades.

Justin Bamberg 15:23



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When my clients entered into a contract for legal representation, that contract was entered into between client and law firm, not quiet and Alex Murdaugh or anybody else, client and law firm, the law firm, dropped the ball here. And Alex Murdaugh, yes, he went and took people's money. But those checks didn't come out of Alex Murdaugh's personal account, my clients money that got taken got taken from the firm's client trust account, that bank account is in the name of the firm, the firm is responsible, it is admirable, for someone in the wake of something like this going on to say we're going to make it right, we're gonna make people whole, that's admirable. And if that is what you are actually doing, then you deserve to be commended for that. But what is not okay. In the way that I view it, these people are not being made home. Okay, these people are being taken advantage of their trust is being taken advantage of their misinformation is being taken advantage of. And there are things that should have been explained to them, that lawyers have an obligation to explain under the rules of professional conduct. For example, lawyers are not allowed to try and limit or mitigate their own or their firm's liability to a client or previous client, by not informing them of certain things. You have a right to seek counsel, we encourage you to seek counsel to discuss this. And given people a reasonable opportunity to do that, when you call somebody in and they call me on and you know, you give them a check, and don't explain any of their rights. You're operating as an attorney, giving them legal counsel, but you're giving them half assed legal counsel.

Mandy Matney 17:25

Justin told us that from what he's seeing, it appears like PMP ed partners underestimated Alex victims when they tried to make them whole. And likely, they never imagined that any of these people would seek legal advice from a lawyer like himself. I honestly

Justin Bamberg 17:44

believe that if people had the correct information, none of them would have just accepted these checks. Like, here you go, this is money that you're owed, they would have contacted an attorney first, that attorney would have done exactly what we're doing here, which is saying, yes, the firm is going to give this individual this money back. But on top of that, you're going to pay interest, you're going to take into consideration punitive damages that the firm may face. Should this matter go to trial, and we're going to look at it like we would look at any case, it really looks like they're being victimized a second time.

Mandy Matney 18:31



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And there lies the problem that we keep saying over and over again. In this case, the powerful refuse to actually admit to their misdeeds and take responsibility for their actions and re-victimize victims in that process, which is horrible. And ever since Justin dropped that press release asking victims to come forward. He keeps hearing these jaw-dropping stories.

Justin Bamberg 18:58

I've been receiving calls from individuals, for example, there was someone who called him and was asking questions. And the underlying situation was really mind-boggling to me. You know, hey, when Alex tried to commit suicide, a week later, he was in rehab. And I understand that but he called me from rehab and told me that he settled my case. How literally, it's so mind-boggling, but at this point, you know, I think most people are in the position that nothing surprises them anymore. You know, that's just one example.

Liz Farrell 19:47

Good, Lord. So we cannot stress this enough. When it comes to allegations of Murdaugh involving crime, the jig is never up. Never. I think most people would call their jets for a while after being airlifted to a trauma center with a booboo on their head and the alleged murder-for-hire slash insurance fraud scheme that ends up on national television. I think most attorneys would probably be a little embarrassed that the whole world now knows that they don't even know about the suicide cause and their own insurance policy, but not our boy. Alex's alleged suicide attempt was on September 4, and four days later, the state Supreme Court suspended his license to practice law in South Carolina from what Justin is saying here. Alex appears to have practiced law after that. Why? Because the jig is never up.

Mandy Matney 20:41

We'll be right back. Okay, so that story that we just heard about Alex allegedly claiming to have solved a case after his suicide incident. That isn't the only shocking story that Justin Bamberg has heard from Alex's clients recently.

Justin Bamberg 21:00

Well, if you look at Mr. Anderson, another client of mine, not only did his money get misappropriated for approximately two years, when law enforcement made it known that money was missing, he then went to the firm, and they took a 40% legal fee, which just blows my mind, it blows my mind that under the eye of the firm, which owes a duty to this individual and others, that two years later, law enforcement tells them that they're missing \$750,000. And when they come in to get their money,



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because every penny of that belongs to them, the firm who says they had nothing to do with anything takes a \$300,000 legal fee. And that is just not okay. And we take issue with that. You know, and these are just a couple of examples on, you know, I know there are others where individuals who have had money missing and either not received any of their money today, or have only received a portion of what they're due. And there's no telling how deep it goes. I really don't know I can only speak to you know that which I had been exposed firsthand to. But it just feels like the deeper you go down the rabbit hole, the more upsetting a hole or dealios because all of this was avoidable. And all of this is very damaging to the legal profession.

Mandy Matney 22:49

I asked Justin about attorney fees, as it seems shocking that PMP Ed appears to be collecting fees from clients who their partner stole from. Is there a clear rule or law about how much lawyers can take in fees and when they can take them?

Justin Bamberg 23:07

So attorneys fees are always contractual in nature at the onset of representation. The law firm says this is what the fees are going to be. This is how we're going to get paid. And generally in the personal injury arena. That fee is on a contingency fee basis. I absolutely think there are some moral questions and some business practice questions with them taking a full 40% fee at that stage, right? If me and my mom go to a restaurant, and her order comes out and it is completely disgusting. And we send it back and they bring out another plate of food. We better not get charged for both. That's not how this doesn't how life works. That's not how business works either.

Mandy Matney 24:01

We asked Justin who owns his own law firm Bamberg legal LLC, if it's possible that PMPED partners like they're claiming we're truly unaware of Elux alleged mass thievery until September 2, the day that they claimed in their own lawsuit that they found out about Alex's fake accounts.

Justin Bamberg 24:22

Well, it really just makes you wonder, you know, you're talking about 567 years, however long and every single year when equity partners or the accountant or the tech people may go over the numbers, they look at the profit. They look at how much money that they need to put in and nobody questions. Hey, that's probably and I was going to FORGE. What's up with that, or, Hey, it looks like in a lot of Alex cases, we're not seeing the reflection of legal fees in Operating accounts, or none of



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those things? Nobody asked at all. You know, in Me, me personally, I've been poor before. So I watch my money, like, I'm never going back, I watch my money, look at my office books. That's just good business sense. And either they were asleep at the wheel. And the firm itself was not paying attention to what was going on. Or maybe they just made and have so much money that nobody cares whether or not they're missing a few million bucks. Either way, I think that that's grossly negligent on the farm, or worse, you know, so if nobody knew that's absolutely grossly negligent. If somebody knew that, it's worse than being gross negligence. But I do not understand how that would have been the case for all these years.

Mandy Matney 25:56

Justin told me that he knew there would be some backlash and getting involved in the Murdaugh mass and publicly calling out PMPED. But it came down to something very simple for him. Right is right and wrong is wrong.

Justin Bamberg 26:13

There were multiple things that made me decide to get involved. I mean, I'd be lying if I said it was like something I just did on a whim. I mean, you know what you're stepping into, okay. I mean, it is what it is like the same thing that allowed Alex Murdaugh to do everything that he did, talking about crash tops of the case, doesn't just go away, because now they're on the receiving end, right. So when you do what Eric did, or you do what I'm doing, you know that there's gonna be some stuff attached to that. And you got to just be prepared to deal with it, you know, but I think the primary motivation for me was, I had always committed myself to fighting the good fight, regardless of who's on the other side. And I've done that, going back to the time I put a claim in against the sheriff's office that my mother was the fourth highest ranking member. On it is what it is, there's right, and then there's wrong. And if you're wrong, you gotta pay the piper for that.

Mandy Matney 27:18

Justin told me that he immediately knew that he made the right decision to go after PMPED, when something really weird happened soon after he stepped into this arena.

Justin Bamberg 27:31

Yeah, any doubts that or reservations rather, doubt is a strong word. But any reservations that I may have had went out of the window, when one of my clients received a phone call from the firm, saying, Yeah, we're getting your file together,



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we're gonna send it where you asked us to send it. And by the way, I'll see you in court.

Mandy Matney 27:53

I want to pause here because this is absolutely horrifying. If the firm is making threats, like I'll see you in court, then that is a huge problem. PMPED appears to have been able to continue its operations without any sort of formal intervention from the Office of disciplinary Council, the state Supreme Court or law enforcement, shouldn't the court be appointing a receiver to freeze PMPED these assets and protect the best interests of these clients? If this is what's going down, then they clearly shouldn't be handling this themselves. And the court needs to step in now.

Justin Bamberg 28:35

Okay, literally Mandy, in the wake of my office sending letters of representation for certain individuals to one of them did receive a phone call from the farm, or an individual at the farm. And the ending of that conversation was I'll see you in court. And the client is like, what exactly do you mean by that is, yeah, you're the Lord. He said he sued. And so in my firm, so I'll see you in court. That's not appropriate. That is indicative of part of the problem here. And I'm sorry, but ain't nobody gonna punch us. That is not gonna fly. And you know, that comment was received a certain way, by my client, it did come off as though it was a semi intimidation slash. Do you really want to do this? And that comment was reported to the appropriate authorities. Because these people are victims, okay. I don't care how people want to label it, knowing that they are victims of a crime that occurred and ain't nobody got a point my clients or punked me or my office, and that ain't going down. So any reservations that I did have about this whole ordeal went out the window. The day I got that phone call, and I know that we're doing the right thing, and we ain't gonna let up because this train ain't got no brakes. Justin plans

Mandy Matney 30:03

on turning up the heat on the firm in the new year. He said a class action lawsuit is still on the table as well as individual lawsuits against P MPD.

Justin Bamberg 30:16

At the end of the day, I'll see whether or not a lawsuit ends up having to get filed after the new year against the farm itself is going to be contingent on on the farm, quite frankly, um, you know, if insurers get involved and perform wants to step up and truly make these people home and make them whole take into consideration all of things including actual and punitive damages, then there may not need to be a



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lawsuit. The whole point of following lawsuits is accountability. It's to hold people accountable when they don't want to voluntarily accept accountability. So where do we end up? Who knows? But I do know that we're going to keep pressing forward. And we're going to press forward against everybody who had anything to do with these folks' money getting taken.

Mandy Matney 31:29

So I will be clear here. While Alex attorneys have claimed he stole money for clients to support an opioid addiction. We don't actually know how many victims are out there. Like we said before, sources have told us that Alex Murdaugh could ultimately be facing hundreds of charges related to financial crimes. But looking at the victims who have been identified in the first two rounds of indictments, we noticed something 80% of them were minorities.

Justin Bamberg 31:57

When I look at the individuals who fell victim to this whole ordeal, I really think they fall into three categories of people, people who just had long term ties to Alex Murdaugh, right and or his family, the minority community, which is very upsetting to me personally. And then equally as upsetting are folks who I would consider working class, just working class folks, that amount of black, white or whatever working class people who fell victim. So the people who are close to us are the Murdaugh family, minority, the minority community, and then your average everyday working class person trying to live the best life they can. And Mr. Bush is actually disabled. You know, and that's part of the troubling aspect of his case and others is that these are not independently wealthy, they don't have to worry about anything financial and life type individuals. These are people who are just trying to make it day by day. And they trusted Alex Murdaugh. But they trusted the firm and the firm brand.

Mandy Matney 33:38

Justin grew up in a middle class family in Bamberg County as the son of two police officers, he told me that back then train tracks literally separated black folks from white folks in Bamberg, South Carolina, Justin didn't forget about his upbringing. And he spent his whole career fighting for people who have been wronged by the system.

Justin Bamberg 34:01

Every single one of these people deserve 150% Respect. It doesn't matter how much money they have. It doesn't matter what type of relationship anybody has with them.



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At the end of the day, an unimportant ball was dropped. Okay. And for a lawyer in a firm that dropped the ball to tell one of these people who's doing nothing more than asserting their rights under the letter of the law. I'll see you in court. It is inappropriate. It's intimidation is disgusting. And it is indicative of the way that his entire process has been handled. And nobody got time for that kind of stuff. This is a new day in the idea that there are people who ain't afraid of nobody. There's no other way to say it. Okay, I'm happy to see people standing up for themselves. I'm happy to see people standing up for themselves and ain't afraid anymore, and ain't got a reason to be afraid. And I'm not saying afraid of an individual, I'm saying afraid of the institution. Right? Those are two separate things. Um, we know that it's a powerful institution that has existed. I mean, it predates the list. You talk about going back in time when my great granddaddy was sharecropping and picking cotton for people, right? It's an institution that is controlled and dominated. And people have always been afraid to book these types of institutions. And I'm happy to see people not not doing that anymore.

Mandy Matney 35:53

We have a lot more to discuss about PMPED, aka the firm, and Alex alleged co conspirators in we're excited to continue to expose the truth wherever it leads and 2022 As always, subscribe to FITSnews.com. For the latest on this story and more and follow the Murdaugh martyrs podcast on Facebook and Instagram at Murdaugh murders pod Until then, have a safe and happy new year from all of us at the Murdaugh murders podcast. Stay tuned.

The Murdaugh murders podcast is created by me, Mandy Matney, and my fiance David Moses, produced by Luna shark productions