



EPISODE 71: Who is Blanca? And What is PMPED Trying To Do Here?

[00:00:00] **Mandy Matney:** I don't know what the future holds for former PMPED attorneys, but the role that they played in allowing Alex Murdaugh to become Alex Murdaugh cannot be ignored. And the more we find out, the more questions we have about what they knew and when they knew it. My name is Mandy Matney. I have been investigating the Murdaugh family for almost four years now. This is the Murdaugh Murders Podcast, produced by my husband, David Moses, and written with Liz Farrell.

[00:00:56] We are excited to announce MMP Premium, a membership community for Murdaugh Murders Podcast and Cup of Justice fans powered by Supercast. So, first of all, do not panic. MMP will still be available for free for everyone. But those of you joining this community will be helping us change the world of journalism for the better. I get tweets asking if we can look into different cases. And right now, we just don't have the resources or time to do that. But next year, we have big plans to hire several amazing journalists who can take on new cases and shed sunlight in the darkest places around the United States and maybe even beyond. Through your subscription, you will be helping us expand our reach into new cases, you will be helping give a voice to more victims, and you will be helping us produce meaningful content that holds agencies accountable and changes our systems for the better.

[00:02:03] Our pre-launch MMP Premium membership sale was released to our SUNscribers on Monday, and this mighty community will help us put the finishing touches on this great new way to interact with our teams, get exclusive content, weekly case recaps, transcripts, enhanced audio episodes, early access to video episodes, case documents, and more. With a community of Premium SUNscribers, we aim to fund new researchers and journalists to help us shine the sunlight. And we will be able to fund additional Freedom of Information Act efforts, purchase trial transcripts, and other public documents that we wouldn't otherwise. We plan to build a new website and foster a community of sleuths with a collective mission to fight for justice and transparency. As we get closer to the double homicide trial, we will soon start providing live coverage and commentary of court hearings, available only to our Premium subscribers. This will keep the interactions respectful and keep the trolls out. Recordings of those hearings will be available to the public afterward, but the live interactions will be reserved for MMP Premium members only.

[00:03:27] And with your help, we are excited that we are planning to launch a new podcast focusing on where crime meets corruption across the country in 2023. And



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we plan on launching Cup of Justice on its own feed also in 2023. But perhaps most ambitious, we are building a platform for journalists to create local stories directed at global audiences, and we want you to be a part of that mission. MMP Premium will be available to the public on December 15th, but you can get a first look at mmp.supercast.com, and check the link in the description. SUNscribers received an email to get a discount and get early access to our beta site until its launch on the 15th. So, be sure to subscribe to our free email list at murdaughmurderspodcast.com to get the most up-to-date alerts and offers. We plan to grow this community as we grow our reach, so stay tuned and stay in the sunlight.

[00:04:49] So, as we wait for this week's pretrial hearing in the double homicide case, Liz and I, along with our researcher Callie Lyons, pored through hundreds of documents and several ongoing cases that we haven't updated y'all on in a long time. Just realized today, it's almost been a month since the Laffitte trial began. Crazy, huh? Anyway, given the big revelations during the Laffitte trial and the latest motions in two cases in particular, we have a big question: What is up with PMPED? Or rather, what is up with the Parker Law Group? Because remember they renamed themselves last year during a little PR crisis started by, you know who.

[00:05:38] And who is Manuel Santis-Cristiani, the first person in all of the Murdaugh cases to name individual PMPED attorneys in a lawsuit? Like so many other victims in this podcast, Manuel's life became linked to Alex Murdaugh's when he was in a car accident more than a decade ago. In 2008, Manuel, a man from Mexico, was in a terrible crash on I-95 in Colleton County, South Carolina. He spent 88 days in the hospital receiving life-saving care. Three years later, in 2011, Alex Murdaugh and two of his PMPED colleagues, Ronnie Crosby and William Barnes, filed a lawsuit on Manuel's behalf against another driver, maker of the driver's vehicle, and the maker of the faulty tire that they say caused the crash.

[00:06:35] Ronnie Crosby, by the way, is a long-time partner at PMPED. His specialty is tire tread separation cases. His is a key name to remember in all of this. You might remember him from the Laffitte trial when he testified. He's one of the attorneys who apparently knew about Alex Murdaugh's missing money before and after the murders. Also, his wife, Jennifer, is the owner of the boutique where Mallory Beach and two of the boat crash victims used to work, just to show you how interconnected all of this is.



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[00:07:10] So, back in 2013, PMPED attorneys negotiated a settlement that was apparently unknown to Manuel, and they agreed to dismiss the case. Crosby signed the dismissal form. According to Santis-Cristiani, PMPED deposited his settlement funds with Palmetto State Bank and failed to inform him about just how much they settled the case for. You might remember Cristiani from a year ago when Alex Murdaugh was indicted on two charges in his case. It was one of the first indictments to come against Alex. According to the indictment, Alex took \$70,000 from Cristiani's client trust account, which was supposed to go to the hospital to cover Cristiani's bill. Instead, Alex had a check made out to Forge LLC, and we all know where that money went — straight into Alex's pocket, allegedly.

[00:08:09] And now, years later, attorneys Korey Williams and Glenn Walters are suing PMPED, Palmetto State Bank, Russell Laffitte, Alex Murdaugh, and his two former colleagues, Ronnie Crosby and William Barnes, who worked on the case initially with him. This lawsuit is essentially saying, "Y'all dropped the ball on this client, not just Alex. You owed a duty to Manuel and you failed at that." Specifically, the lawsuit accuses Barnes, Crosby, and PMPED of aiding and abetting and civil conspiracy, which is strong language to use lawyer to lawyer. Manuel's attorneys are not only calling for the court to award his client actual punitive damages. They are demanding, quote, an immediate, full, complete, and accurate accounting of any and all funds, costs, and expenses related to the settlement. They're saying, "We want all of the receipts in this." Manuel still claims he doesn't even know the total amount that was settled in his case. Essentially, Williams and Walters are being ballsy here, and they are going essentially where other victims' lawyers haven't really gone before in accusing PMPED of being a part of the conspiracy.

[00:09:39] **Liz Farrell:** And clearly, we can see why. PMPED has fired back at this lawsuit with full force. Within a few weeks, the firm's three attorneys, Wallace Lightsey, James May, and Jessica Monsell, filed a nine-page complaint basically saying, "How dare you?" and "Check your facts," asking for the court to sanction Manuel's attorneys for making defamatory allegations before filing the lawsuit. So, PMPED says that Manuel knew about the settlement because of a woman named Blanca Simpson. Now, we have talked about Blanca several times on this podcast. We know there are at least two Blancas in the Murdaugh universe. There is a Blanca who was Russell's assistant at Palmetto State Bank as we've reported. And it appears the Blanca who was mentioned several times in Alex's jailhouse phone calls was Blanca Simpson. That's a different Blanca. It's been reported that Blanca Simpson



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was the Murdaugh's housekeeper. We have not confirmed that, but we do know that Maggie did at one point have a housekeeper named Blanca. Either way, Blanca Simpson appears to be a key part of PMPED's defense in the case, which is weird because it also appears that she's the reason for the lawsuit.

[00:10:56] PMPED said Manuel not only knew about the settlement, he apparently traveled to Mexico to Hampton County for mediation where Blanca Simpson translated for him. Attorney's fees and litigation expenses were paid from the settlement funds, which left \$143,857.24 for Manuel. Of that amount, \$70,000 was held in escrow to pay his medical bills, which Alex eventually stole, allegedly. PMPED also maintains that the remaining balance of Manuel's settlement, \$73,000, was wired to him in 2016 through Palmetto State Bank. On September 27th 2021, after Alex's financial crimes were exposed, PMPED deposited \$70,000 in a trust account for Manuel. PMPED says they couldn't get ahold of Manuel to give him the \$70,000 and they were unaware of the medical liens he owed at the time. So, the money was still sitting there.

[00:11:52] But typical to every Murdaugh case, here is where it gets really weird. According to PMPED attorney Lee Cope, he ran into Blanca at the Food Lion either late last year or early this year, and they got to talking about Manuel's settlement. Later, Blanca told him that Manuel wanted her to hold onto the money in an American bank account because he was afraid the Mexican government would take it away if they wired the money to Mexico. Blanca told PMPED that Manuel wanted her to have control over the account, and PMPED was like, "We need to talk to Manuel about that."

[00:12:28] **Mandy Matney:** And then, it got weirder. According to the *Hampton County Guardian*, which was citing a document filed in Hampton County Court on June 24th 2022, Blanca Simpson was named Santis-Cristiani's power of attorney on May 19th 2022. We looked for that document, and our researcher, Callie Lyons, found it. And that's where it gets even weirder. Manuel's attorney Korey Williams stamped the power of attorney document and it appears like he filed it. Why did he want Blanca to be Manuel's power of attorney? And why doesn't he mention Blanca at all in his lawsuit? But according to Crosby's affidavit, he had spoken to Blanca Simpson in June 2022 while trying to get Cristiani his money. And after Blanca was apparently granted power of attorney in his case, Simpson allegedly told Crosby that Korey Williams was representing Manuel. Crosby then called Williams and told him that his



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money was in a trust. Crosby said he told Williams that he would provide a copy of Manuel's file to him. He just needed it authorized by Manuel. Then, according to Crosby, he didn't hear anything from them until they were sued in October. So, that's two times PMPED told Blanca they needed to speak with Manuel to authorize an action, though it's not clear why. If Blanca were Manuel's power of attorney, why couldn't she authorize PMPED herself to provide Williams with a copy of his file?

[00:14:20] And another really weird thing: Ronnie Crosby said that he asked Blanca Simpson in October 2022 why they were being sued. And she, quote, confirmed that she was unaware of anything they had done and told Ronnie that PMPED should not be a part of the case. According to Ronnie's affidavit, Blanca said, quote, this wasn't supposed to go this far; and that it was supposed to be a settlement with the firm, quote, because of all that had gone on. And what is the "this" that wasn't supposed to go this far? We have some ideas on that.

[00:15:02] So, here, we need to talk about Blanca. We went back to our transcripts of all of the jailhouse phone calls that we reviewed. Granted, we know that it isn't all of them, but it appears that Alex started bugging Buster to call someone named Blanca on November 18th 2021.

[00:15:22] **Alex Murdaugh:** Will you do that? Did you call Blanca?

[00:15:26] **Buster Murdaugh:** No, I didn't call Blanca, but I'll do that today.

[00:15:31] **Mandy Matney:** What's weird about that? Alex was indicted for Manuel Santis-Cristiani's case on that same day, November 18th 2021. And then, Alex kept bugging Buster. Here's another mention on November 23rd 2021, just a few days later.

[00:15:53] **Alex Murdaugh:** Did you talk to Blanca?

[00:15:56] **Buster Murdaugh:** No. I —

[00:15:58] **Alex Murdaugh:** It's okay. Alright. Will you —



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[00:16:00] **Buster Murdaugh:** What am I supposed to tell her again?

[00:16:03] **Alex Murdaugh:** Just tell her that I want to, that I want to give her a call and explain to her what she has to do and if that's okay with her.

[00:16:12] **Buster Murdaugh:** What is, yeah, with the account?

[00:16:15] **Alex Murdaugh:** Yeah. And will you do that today? I'd like to call her over the holidays.

[00:16:19] **Buster Murdaugh:** Yeah, I'll do that today. Now, me and Blanca ain't never been rubbing on the same cylinder.

[00:16:23] **Alex Murdaugh:** What?

[00:16:25] **Buster Murdaugh:** I said me and Blanca. I've got some serious, I've got some serious problems the way Blanca's done some things.

[00:16:31] **Alex Murdaugh:** Like what?

[00:16:33] **Buster Murdaugh:** You know, I mean, I went out to Moselle the other day. She didn't tell anybody. I mean, she's packed up everything at Moselle. I don't know where anything is, so I can't find anything that I want.

[00:16:43] **Mandy Matney:** So, as you remember, Blanca sold several of Maggie Murdaugh's items on Poshmark after she was murdered, which was obviously super weird and sketchy and says a lot about her character. But what account are they talking about? This account is mentioned again along with Blanca's name on a December 5th phone call with Buster.

[00:17:06] **Buster Murdaugh:** I did, I talked to Blanca and she said she'd be happy to set up an account to be able for you to call her.

[00:17:11] **Alex Murdaugh:** Thank you for doing that. I need to get that number, too.



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[00:17:16] **Liz Farrell:** So, this account that Alex suddenly needed Blanca's help with. I'm just throwing this out there, but at Alex's first bond hearing on the financial indictments, Dick Harpootlian told the court that there was one client whom the firm wanted to pay back but they couldn't. They were having trouble locating him, meaning Alex's attorneys seemed to be aware that there was \$70,000 for an allegedly undocumented immigrant whom no one could find sitting in one of the firm's accounts. Around this very same time, a woman named Blanca also has a conversation with one of PMPED's partners about the \$78,000, allegedly telling him that this allegedly undocumented immigrant whom no one could find wants her to be in charge of his money here in the United States. And around that very same time, Alex is talking about a woman named Blanca and an account being set up. And later, after this lawsuit pops up out of the blue, this same Blanca allegedly tells another PMPED partner that, quote, this — whatever quote this is — wasn't supposed to go this far. I wanna be clear. I'm not accusing Alex of anything specifically. I'm not accusing him of masterminding a plot to get his housekeeper to steal money from behind bars. But to quote Justin Bamberg, something in the milk definitely isn't clean here. And we'll be right back.

[00:18:45] **Mandy Matney:** So, obviously, Blanca is raising a lot of red flags for us, and we're still not sure on her deal here. But what is important here is how strongly PMPED is fighting this and why. In PMPED's response, they accused Manuel's attorneys of filing the lawsuit, quote, based solely on information provided to them by Blanca Simpson without further investigation or that they simply made up, meaning in response to the lawsuit, PMPED is accusing Manuel's attorneys of defaming them while also insinuating that those lawyers are making up facts which could be construed as defamatory. PMPED is asking for the court to dismiss the lawsuit. And, of course, the situation has escalated. Manuel's attorneys filed a fiery motion saying that PMPED's motion to dismiss is a, quote, poorly drafted emotional response to plaintiff's serious allegations that he deserves an accounting of any funds that were allegedly recovered from the accident that occurred in 2008. Manuel's attorneys are hinting the PMPED is hiding something when it comes to the settlement. Here is David reading that motion from his attorneys.

[00:20:15] **David Moses:** Moreover, the court should note that the defendants never mentioned in its motion to dismiss the total amount of funds that it received on behalf of the plaintiff. The amount that the defendants received on behalf of the plaintiff is still a mystery to this day.



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[00:20:31] **Mandy Matney:** Cristiani's attorneys noted in their motion that Ronnie Crosby and William Barnes III were the attorneys of record for Cristiani when this case was settled. And where were they? Here is David reading the motion again.

[00:20:47] **David Moses:** Where were these two lawyers while defendant Richard Alex Murdaugh was stealing the plaintiff's funds? This is totally incredible and disingenuous conduct on the part of the defendants, including the two defendant lawyers that are trying to procedurally short-circuit the legal process to make the claims against them go away without giving plaintiffs his rights in court.

[00:21:11] **Mandy Matney:** These motions were heard in court last week, according to *The Post and Courier*. A judge still has not ruled on them.

[00:21:21] **Liz Farrell:** So, again, Manuel is the first client of Alex to come out specifically and unequivocally against PMPED. As these cases progress, we don't think he's going to be the last. But for now, he's the only one publicly calling them out like this. Throughout all of this, we've heard some pretty big numbers in terms of how much Alex has allegedly stolen from clients and \$70,000 is among the lowest, if not the lowest amount. Don't get us wrong. \$70,000 is a lot of money, but is it enough money for attorneys to take such a risk? We say this a lot, but if you come for the king, don't miss. Coming for PMPED is a big, big deal. Why are they doing this? It could simply be that what's fair is fair and what's right is right. But is there more to it? Does Blanca Simpson and Manuel Santis-Cristiani's attorneys know something we don't about what might be in that paperwork? In other words, is this case about more than the \$70,000 that was allegedly stolen?

[00:22:26] **Mandy Matney:** Let's talk about PMPED's lawsuit against Alex and where that stands. First, a quick run-through of the history here that we can now talk about with some perspective. As you know, in September 2021, in the hours after Alex Murdaugh's so-called roadside shooting, two partners from PMPED went to the crime scene to tell investigators that Alex had been let go from the law firm because he'd been stealing from them. There have been a couple ways to look at this. The first is the generous one and consider that PMPED's act would be that of good citizens. They knew something was wrong, and as soon as they knew it, they went to authorities. Like literally went to them physically and in that moment, went to them to the shooting scene.



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[00:23:15] But as you know, there's another take on why they did that. Back then, even before we knew what we now know, the act of going to the scene of this alleged shooting felt like a giant uh-oh moment for the firm. From the outside, it looked as though Alex's bizarre behavior head backed PMPED into a corner of sorts, and this was them cutting bait. It was PMPED making a formal town square declaration that they were no longer connected to Alex Murdaugh.

[00:23:52] **Liz Farrell:** Which is understandable because Alex had gone too far for them and reality was closing in. PMPED had to know that Alex's alleged financial schemes were inevitably going to be discovered by law enforcement and that this was going to put their law firm in the spotlight where everyone and his Office of Disciplinary Counsel (ODC) brother would be asking what did PMPED know and when did they know it. So, remember lawyers generally fear the ODC more than they do law enforcement. Without a license to practice law, a lawyer cannot earn a living. For lawyers like the ones at PMPED, this would be like taking all the honey away from Winnie-the-Pooh for the rest of his life. Those PMPED bears are not about to give up their honey because if PMPED had known Alex was up to no good for a while and hadn't reported it because they were quietly trying to contain that mess within the confines of their brick walls, and that would be a big old honey deal-breaker for them with the ODC. And we'll talk about all this in a second because one of the biggest issues for us right now is the ODC's investigation into PMPED.

[00:25:04] **Mandy Matney:** So, up until this point in September 2021, PMPED seemed to be publicly supporting Alex. And by their own accounts on the stand at the Russell Laffitte trial, it seems like they simply viewed him as a grieving father and widower, like the victim of a horrific crime. They were all at the funerals. Ronnie Crosby even gave Paul Murdaugh's eulogy, which let's talk about that for a second because people found this really strange at the time. Why Ronnie? Why did Alex choose Ronnie, the guy who was a part of the group at PMPD looking into those missing fees, to give his son's eulogy? Obviously, we don't know the circumstances that led Ronnie to be giving that eulogy. But if Alex did ask him to do that, then Alex is an even bigger psychopath than we suspect because what a creepy and manipulative thing to do, right? "Ronnie can't be mad at me now because I'm a sad father. And now, I'm giving him the big honor of making him a part of my mourning process." Anyway, the question is this: Behind the scenes, did PMPED really see Alex as an innocent man and an unfortunate and misunderstood victim of circumstance?



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[00:26:29] **Liz Farrell:** I mean, it's pretty clear that when the report came out that Alex had been shot at by a stranger while changing a tire, PMPED immediately didn't believe it. Going off of PMPED's public stance on Alex, we would've assumed they'd have given Alex the benefit of the doubt with that, but that's not what they did. As you guys know, the Russell Laffitte trial gave us new perspective on the murders and where they fit into the timeline of Alex's problems with PMPED. And frankly, we don't think we know the half of it yet when it comes to what PMPED knew and when they knew it.

[00:27:00] But here's what we do know about them. PMPED knew Alex was trying to hide money from the boat crash victims, or at least saying that's what he was doing or at least that he was saying that's what he was doing. PMPED had confronted Alex about missing money before the murders. And on the day of the murders, they put down their foot and told him that they wanted to see evidence that he had not stolen the money. At some point — PMPED says it was September 2nd 2021 — they began looking into Alex's clients and whether he had been stealing from them. And it was then that they began — in their own words — trying to make those clients, quote, whole. In other words, paying them back for the money Alex allegedly took from them. How PMPED allegedly went about making victims whole is going to be important, by the way, not just with the civil suits, some of which have settled, but with the ODC complaint.

[00:27:52] So, there are a couple of things I wanna mention here. One is that it has always struck us as highly unusual when you consider the time it took between when PMPED says it first started looking into Alex's client funds and when PMPED started paying back clients and when the South Carolina grand jury started indicting Alex two months later. I mean, guys, that was fast. Think about it. Things went from zero to 60 in September 2021. They went from knowing about the Satterfields, Alex stealing from his maid's family, to suddenly knowing about dozens of other victims very quickly. And I don't mean us. We still don't know the full list of Alex's victims. But we know there are at least 27 of them. And we're not sure why there haven't been more indictments, frankly.

[00:28:41] **Mandy Matney:** Another peculiar thing about this time was the lawsuit that PMPED filed against Alex on October 6th 2021. PMPED says it first discovered Alex's Forge scheme on September 2nd 2021. On that same day, they say they found a check on Alex's desk from Chris Wilson's office that Alex had deposited into his



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personal account. Also on that day, PMPED says it went through Alex's client files and found anomalies, including checks from the law firm that were made out to Forge Consulting. PMPED says it called Forge and found out that Forge did not have accounts corresponding to those checks.

[00:29:33] **Liz Farrell:** September 2nd 2021 was a very busy day for these guys, right? PMPED must be really good at solving mysteries for them to go from spotting a check for hundreds of thousands of dollars made out to Alex from Chris Wilson's office on Alex's desk to discerning that this check had been not only deposited, but deposited to an account bearing the name "Forge" to then being able to suss out which of Alex's clients had been stolen from using that Forge subterfuge to then checking with Forge to see which checks they'd actually received. Not only is PMPED great at solving puzzles, they and Forge must have had some responsive employees and some slick back-end systems for them to have so quickly figured out this scheme that Alex had allegedly been able to pull off for years without detection.

[00:30:26] Anyway, according to their lawsuit, the next morning, PMPED confronted Alex and demanded his resignation, which he gave them that afternoon. By the way, according to Ronnie Crosby's testimony in the Laffitte trial last month, Alex had admitted to stealing client money during this confrontation. And yet Alex wasn't fired. No, no. They let a guy who should have been walking out of that office in handcuffs resign. Again, we have to remind you of Alex's jailhouse call with his brother, John Marvin. When John Marvin informed him that Cory Fleming had been fired from his law firm and Alex was like, "For real fired or...?" We will continue mentioning this phone call for all of eternity because it so perfectly demonstrates how the men in this world do not understand consequence because they were always given pillows for a gentle landing. But Alex being Alex, he could not appreciate those pillows.

[00:31:26] **Mandy Matney:** The next day, September 4th, was the alleged shooting incident. You know, the incident we were told that was committed by a passerby targeting Alex and that maybe it was Maggie and Paul's killer. And then, we were told that it was a suicide attempt or rather a drug addict's final act of paternal love. Anyway, it wasn't until that weird day because of that weird incident that PMPED finally told law enforcement what they had found two days earlier because, again, uh-oh. A guy whose family was murdered hours after they confronted him about missing money was now the victim of a very weird and suspicious roadside shooting



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one day after they allowed him to resign instead of getting arrested. Oh, and they didn't tell the ODC about all of this until September 6th, four full days after they allegedly discovered the Forge scheme. PMPED only told the authorities after Alex, the man they let resign, left them no other choice. You know who they did tell, though? Palmetto State Bank. According to Ronnie Crosby's testimony at the Laffitte trial, they let the bank know on Friday that if Alex had loans out with them, which LOL, if Alex had loans with them, there would be, quote, issues. You know, priorities. And we'll be right back.

[00:33:11] **Liz Farrell:** So, okay. In the same lawsuit, PMPED says that every client who was known to be a victim of Alex at that point had been reimbursed. Again, this complaint was filed October 6th 2021. They went from not knowing about this complex scheme for years to being able to identify and reimburse victims within 34 days. And it seems they were including their attempt to contact Manuel Santis-Cristiani through Blanca Simpson as a win. Now, this lawsuit is also interesting because of how Alex responded to it 37 days later. He was basically like, "I plead the Fifth." In other words, he didn't deny any of the allegations or fully answer the complaint. And this was basically like handing PMPED a wrapped gift to be opened at a future date. By pleading the Fifth, Alex would eventually leave the court no choice but to agree to a summary judgment in the case if PMPED asked for such a thing, which of course they did. Like everything else in the Murdaugh world, this situation is wearing shady boots.

[00:34:16] Okay. Rewind to September 2021 again. You already know that despite PMPED having every reason to be suspicious of Alex Murdaugh, in July 2021, Johnny Parker, the big daddy partner at PMPED loaned him \$250,000, which Alex apparently used to pay back Chris Wilson in part. On September 2nd 2021, the day of the big PMPED investigation, Randy Murdaugh apparently transferred \$75,000 into Alex's bank account at Palmetto State Bank. Four days later, Randy had to, again, loan money to Alex. This time, it was for \$15,000 for rehab. Yes, Alex apparently spent the equivalent of two full-time Hampton County salaries in two days. On what we still don't know.

[00:35:01] In October 2021, Johnny and Randy both filed complaints against Alex to get their money back. And Alex signed confessions of judgment to be like, "Yes, indeedly. I do owe that money and I will give it back to them." Around the same time Alex's brother, John Marvin, was liquidating Alex's assets by selling them to family



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members and other people within their inner circle, they were using the money from the liquidations to pay off Alex's and Randolph's strange and unsecured loans at Palmetto State Bank. I picture this as looking like a snow globe with Alex Murdaugh in the middle and little dollar bills floating around him instead of snowflakes. Because even though it appears that money is moving away from Alex, it's all staying within the confines of that little glass globe. Because even though it appears that money is moving away from Alex, it's all staying within the confines of that little glass globe.

[00:35:52] **Mandy Matney:** Meaning, Johnny Parker and Randy Murdaugh's lawsuits and John Marvin's liquidations and the repayment of some of Palmetto State Bank loans were viewed by many as being nothing more than tricks to keep Alex's money away from the victims of the boat crash. By the way, the estate lawyers hired by the Murdaugh family to tend to Paul and Maggie's assets have likewise been accused by the Beach family attorney of charging unnecessary fees, which is basically consuming the Murdaugh's assets. In other words, it looks like all of these people, whether knowingly or unknowingly, are helping to keep Alex's money circulating in his own tiny economy. And to some, it has even looked like PMPED is doing this very same thing when it comes to their own efforts to collect the money Alex allegedly stole. Now, remember PMPED partners had a duty to protect Alex's clients, whether or not they knew he was stealing. That is a liability unto itself. It doesn't mean that they're wrong for wanting to recoup money allegedly stolen from them. Who wouldn't wanna do that? But there are many people who see Alex's alleged thefts as being an inevitable result of PMPED's alleged lack of oversight.

[00:37:26] So, what I'm saying here is this: Yes, PMPED had a right to collect that money from Alex if he stole it. But they also had a responsibility to prevent that money from being allegedly stolen in the first place. And I know this will cause some members of PMPED's ears to bleed. But sometimes in life, we need to buck up and pay for mistakes that were made on our watch or accept the loss that comes as a result of our own apathy, inaction, lack of result, misplaced trust, or whatever it is to allow someone like Alex to allegedly get away with what he did for so long. And you know what? I'm going to say this even more explicitly. PMPED should take the loss on this one. Instead, they're trying to snatch dollars out of the hands of the very victims they claim to wanna make whole, and they are doing exactly what Alex appears to have been doing, and that's keeping money away from the boat crash victims. Here is how.



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[00:38:38] **Liz Farrell:** In August of this past year, PMPED filed a motion to compel Alex to fully answer their complaint, which of course he was like, "Nah." In October, Judge Bentley Price, who is the chief administrative judge for the 14th Circuit, heard arguments from PMPED in favor of his summary judgment. On November 18th, an unsigned order was filed at Colleton County Court granting PMPED their motion for summary judgment. The order ends by stating that a formal damages hearing will be held in open court to determine how much Alex will owe to PMPED. It's not clear yet when that will be scheduled. This is not a good look at all for PMPED.

[00:39:17] So, first, I reached out to Judge Price to verify that this unsigned order wasn't filed preemptively. I say this because generally, the lawyers involved in a case are the ones who write the orders that the judges then sign. Some lawyers take liberties with what the order says or how strongly it's worded, etc. I'm not saying the lawyers did that here, though. This seems to be a very ordinary order. But it's worth noting that PMPED historically has been known for its close relationships with judges in the 14th Circuit. I've seen Judge Price in action and he seems like he's fair and reasoned. But I have no idea what happens behind the scenes. And unfortunately, because of the history here with the 14 Circuit, the Murdaughs and their law firm, we have to raise these questions. This is not a statement about Price's reputation. Nevertheless, his office did not respond to my question about whether or not this was a legitimate and signed order. Now, back to the part where this isn't a good look for PMPED.

[00:40:17] **Mandy Matney:** Remember the receivership that was appointed last year in the boat crash case to track every last penny owned by Alex Murdaugh? Recently, we learned that the receivers have found around \$1.3 million, which let's just say it, that's it? Where did all of the rest of the money go? And of that money, the receivership is asking to be paid \$374,000 for their work, so that only leaves about a million dollars to be split among a lot of victims. Now, when the receivership was put in place, they basically laughed in Johnny and Randy's faces about those complaints and Alex's confession of judgment. They were like, "Get outta here with that, y'all." But in the meantime, Alex offered a confession of judgment to the Satterfield family, admitting to stealing \$3.8 million from them, which was great. We totally think he did that as a way to try to convince the judge that he was a good man taking responsibility for his actions and therefore, should be let out on bail. Obviously, that, like many other things, backfired on him. So, again, the receivership was put into place by boat crash victims' attorney Mark Tinsley. This technically puts them at the



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front of a line when it comes to doling out assets for victims. But ultimately, it's up to the judge to decide who gets what here.

[00:41:50] **Liz Farrell:** The judge will have to look at the long line of Alex's creditors, which includes the boat crash victims, the Satterfields, the other financial crime victims, Johnny Parker and Randy Murdaugh, PMPED, and Nautilus Insurance — that's the insurance company that Alex allegedly bullied into paying that giant settlement after Gloria Satterfield's fall. Assuming there are no settlements, the judge will have to look at that long line and consider what's fair and in what order. Think of that line like the line for the lifesaving rafts on the Titanic. Think of the scene from the movie when all the women and children are being lowered into the water and some rich guys hop on and hope they're not noticed. That is what we see happening here with PMPED. While this order doesn't technically place them at the front of the line, it most certainly puts them on deck where the rafts are. And this brings us to one of our biggest ongoing questions in all of this besides "Where did the money go?" And that's: What is the ODC doing about PMPED? Or better yet, will the ODC have the strength necessary to take action should they find evidence of wrongdoing at PMPED?

[00:43:01] **Mandy Matney:** From what we saw at the Russell Laffitte trial, PMPED partner Ronnie Crosby and CFO Jeanne Seckinger appeared to be prepared for their line of questioning. Meaning if there were corners to look around, then they looked there down the whole street and in all of the buildings before getting up on that stand. Like we keep saying, the Murdaugh case is a major opportunity for the state to take out the trash, wherever that trash may be. No one should be protected. If there are lawyers who have been stealing money, then that is the state's duty to call all of it out and call it out loudly. They need to call out any law firms where money is being stolen outright and where it is being stolen through inflating costs and faking expenses. They need to call out any law firms that are okay with their lawyers creating special interest companies and other small businesses that they can then use to bill clients for alleged third party services without ever informing their client of this potential conflict of interest. And they need to call out law firms whose cultures promote and encourage the excessive stripping of client settlements, which is leaving those clients, the people whose injuries are being exploited here, with pennies on the dollar.



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[00:44:32] It requires a lot of bravery for lawyers to do the right thing in this state when it comes to reporting bad behavior. Lawyerly bad acts in South Carolina are kind of like shootings in nightclubs. The system offers such little assurance that justice will prevail, meaning that the bad guys will actually end up behind bars, that there are simply no witnesses to any crimes. It's too dangerous, so the gunmen go free. Over the past year, we've gotten a front-row seat to see how this works, and we think we see things pretty clearly. Honestly, it seems like it's a game of unspoken blackmail and implied bullying, which is basically the Good Ole Boy system. It is structured so that those who have the strength to call out unethical behavior do so at the potential expense of their careers. And that is where the cancer lies. That is at the heart of what needs to be fixed. If the law, if the rules are applied equally and without favor, then only then will we see change. Stay tuned and stay in the sunlight. There is a lot more coming.

[00:46:06] **Outro:** The Murdaugh Murders Podcast is created and hosted by me, Mandy Matney, produced by my husband, David Moses. And Liz Farrell is our executive editor. From Luna Shark Productions.