



## EPISODE 16: 'Dear Creighton': Connecting the Dots on Alex Murdaugh's Frame of Mind

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[00:00:00] **Mandy Matney:** Hello and happy Monday. We are here in the third week of what could be one of the longest criminal trials in South Carolina history and prosecutors are still building their foundation in their case against Alex Murdaugh. There have been seven days of testimony so far. We've heard from 33 witnesses, six of whom did not testify in front of the grand jury. Those six testified in what's being called a trial within a trial — an in-camera hearing about whether the jury can hear testimony of Alex's financial pressures at the time of the murders. This morning, the State is expected to present its seventh witness in the trial within the trial and it is possible that Judge Clifton Newman will issue his decision about letting in evidence of Alex Murdaugh's prior bad acts. This decision could be devastating for the defense. If the jury is able to hear about the financial pressures, then they might understand what was on Alex's mind on the day he allegedly murdered his wife and son. After a long week of trial, I got together Friday evening with my COJ co-hosts Liz Farrell and Eric Bland to talk about the biggest moments so far in the trial and what we think the State needs to do in tying all of this together for the jury. So, here we go. Cups up. Let's get into it.

[00:01:35] **Liz Farrell:** Cups up, guys.

[00:01:36] **Eric Bland:** Cups up.

[00:01:37] **Mandy Matney:** Cups up. Oh my God, what a week.

[00:01:39] **Eric Bland:** What a week.

[00:01:41] **Liz Farrell:** It feels like four weeks. I mean, today felt like four weeks in one day. So, I have a question, Eric. Are Dick and Jim used to long trials like this? This isn't typical for South Carolina, right, that a trial would go on for weeks? Usually, they're a one-week situation. Isn't that right, Eric?

[00:01:58] **Eric Bland:** Jim is because he's done a lot of RICO cases in federal court. A lot of federal court trials are more complex and they take more time. Dick has not done a trial like this in a long, long time. Most of his state court



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trials are less than a week 'cause he does more civil work these days than criminal. And Dick is showing fatigue, you know, as any person would at the end of a long week.

[00:02:20] **Liz Farrell:** But generally speaking, trials here don't go past two three weeks. I mean, usually, they're a one-week situation. Isn't that right, Eric?

[00:02:29] **Eric Bland:** Yes. The longest trial I've ever had in my life has been two weeks and a day.

[00:02:32] **Liz Farrell:** Wow.

[00:02:33] **Eric Bland:** So, I've never — this would be like starting, I guess, Wednesday, 'cause they started a Wednesday before this one. You know, they have a couple more days.

[00:02:40] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah.

[00:02:40] **Eric Bland:** They're nowhere in sight of finishing this trial, depending on how he rules. If he rules that a lot of 404(b) stuff comes in, then it's gonna be a very, very, very long trial.

[00:02:50] **Mandy Matney:** That's something that I was just talking to Liz about. I just got really overwhelmed today and just had this feeling of like, oh my gosh, we are at the beginning. This is a literal marathon. And I think that's what's frustrating about the 404 stuff is like I think Newman has heard enough. I understand his point that he wants to be able to say that he listened to everything and blah, blah, blah. But I think it's just exhausting listening to the evidence and then knowing that we're gonna have — we might have to listen to it again plus more plus a lot more and there's just no end in sight.

[00:03:27] **Liz Farrell:** Well, that's a good point. So, why don't we start talking about this, guys? Because there's a lot of people out there who have been asking us questions and the 404(b) stuff is part of that. So, before we start talking about it in earnest, I wanna make sure that people are understanding



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what we're referring to when we say 404(b). So, Eric, do you wanna explain 404(b) to us and sort of what is going on in the courtroom when the jury is not present? Why the jury is not present when it's happening?

[00:03:52] **Eric Bland:** Sure. There's a two-step, two-prong analysis that a court has to do. 404(b) is under these South Carolina rules of evidence. And what it says is generally, a person's character, bad character, cannot be used against him to prove that he did another crime. And the seminal case is called State v. Lyle and Liz has talked about it at length in other podcasts. But it essentially says that unless you can by clear and convincing evidence, which is the middle standard in between beyond a reasonable doubt, which Alex has to be convicted of, and a preponderance of evidence, which is more likely than not. So, if you could do it on a scale of one to 100, more likely than not, it's 50 and a little bit percent. Clear and convincing is about 65 to 67% and beyond a reasonable doubt is about 98% or more. So, it's a little higher burden. And what it essentially says is you have to be able to show that it's part and parcel of proving he did the crime that he's charged with. And I think that acid test and that's the standard has been met. But once it's met, then the evidence shifts to Rule 403, which says even though it can come in, is it more probative, meaning more likely to assist the jury and less prejudicial? If it's more prejudicial, then probative meaning more prejudicial and hurtful and could confuse the jury rather than help it, it won't come in. I think that Judge Newman ultimately is gonna let in a lot of the 404(b) stuff. And what that means, though, is the trial lengthens substantially. It also means that Dick's case, when he gets it, will lengthen substantially. And I gotta tell you, guys. I've been in court, I think four of the six days I've been here and that jury is showing fatigue. They're angry. They're worried about their personal lives. They're frustrated. What they don't understand, Liz and Mandy is —

[00:05:56] **Liz Farrell:** Why are you saying that? Are you saying that they're — you're noticing their facial expressions and stuff like that? What are you —

[00:06:01] **Eric Bland:** Oh, yeah. Well, I watched them walk out twice today. What they're saying is just give us the last witness. Give us the Pauls, the Paul Greers. Just give us those witnesses. I don't need the bricks, the brick witnesses that lead up to it — the guy that found the bullets, the guy that handed off the bullets to the guy in Colleton, the guy that handed him off to the guy on I-26, the guy that took him the SLED.



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[00:06:21] **Liz Farrell:** Right.

[00:06:22] **Eric Bland:** They don't want those witnesses but that's a problem because the State has to do that.

[00:06:27] **Liz Farrell:** I think what I'm noticing and I think, Mandy, you, too, is that a lot of people get their legal knowledge from television as probably we do to a certain extent as well. Because those, you know, it's on TV. It's very exciting and there's things that happen that just don't happen in real life. And one of the things that happens in real life is this painstaking process of getting every little bit of evidence that they're using to prove that Alex did this on the court record. If they don't do that, then they end up with Dick and Jim challenges. So, they have to do this thing, and we've said this many times to each other but this is just the beginning. So, we are only about — I think it's about 30 witnesses in, not counting the 404(b) witnesses. That's just over 10% of the witness list. And who knows if that witness list is getting added to or what have you. So, I think that people making these conclusions about whether Alex is guilty or not at this point — it's just. I don't even think they know what's in store for them at this. We have so much more to go.

[00:07:24] **Eric Bland:** Don't forget after Dick's case, and I hate to say this to you, guys, the State's got a rebuttal case and they can put on more witnesses after Dick's done with his case. It's a never-ending Christmas fruitcake.

[00:07:36] **Liz Farrell:** So, explain that with the financial — so, before the trial started, there were a couple of motions in limine, which is motions to exclude evidence, and Judge Newman told everyone that he does not like motions in limine. He would rather decide these things as they're going. And so, what happened to get us to this point, Eric, with Jim opening the door to the financials, we talked about this on our — I think our last episode about how or the one before that with the financials. What can Creighton do if he can't mention the financials in his opening statement? How does he sneak it into testimony? And he went right through the door when Jim opened it. So, talk a little bit about that.

[00:08:11] **Eric Bland:** Alex was kneecapped ironically by Paul's two best friends and by his own best friends. And he was kneecapped because Jim asked, well — first Creighton said, "Do you know Alex?" "Oh, I know Alex. Yes, I



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know Alex. He's a wonderful father. He's a wonderful husband. He loves us like children." And Jim expanded upon that and opened the door because he mentioned the boating accident and he got into Alex's good character. He's a nice guy. He lets you guys hunt. You feel you can have free access to the property. You can sleep there. Everything, all the guns, all the toys you want to have, pig hunt, deer hunt, you name it. Well, Creighton then finished up. Well, do you really know Alex? Do you know that he's, you know, was accused of stealing \$795,000? You don't know anything about the boat case, do you? No, I don't know anything about the boat case. You don't know anything about his dealings with Palmetto State Bank? No. I don't know anything about the dealings with Palmetto State Bank. So, he really kneecapped Alex and it was so ironic because these two lovely kids actually blew his alibi and blew all of the statements that he said about not being at the kennel out the window. Like you said to me last night, there wasn't a need to have voice recognition experts. Those two kids were voice recognition experts. They said 99 and a hundred percent.

[00:09:29] **Liz Farrell:** So, going back to the Jim opening the door, was that a big failure for Jim? Just in the sense of like he — wouldn't he have foreseen that being the door that Creighton would walk through by asking Rogan Gibson and Will loving what kind of guy they thought Alex to be? Didn't he even ask, "Do you think he could kill his family?" kind of thing.

[00:09:48] **Eric Bland:** It was close but I think they actually want this to come in because I think there's gonna be a real good appeal on this. Our courts are very concerned, our appellate courts, about convicting somebody of B because he's done A. And I think that they're banking on that one — they're gonna get a not guilty verdict regardless. I doubt they're gonna get, I mean, a hung jury, I doubt they're gonna get a not guilty verdict. But if he's somehow convicted, they're gonna have a strong appeal because Judge Newman has let a lot of stuff in that maybe other judges would not. He's at the end of his career and I think he'd rather err on the side of letting stuff in than not let it in and Alex getting off. I think Judge Newman does not like Alex Murdaugh. That's clear.

[00:10:30] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah. Who does ?

[00:10:31] **Eric Bland:** Well, his family does.



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[00:10:33] **Mandy Matney:** I don't even think they do. And I think the thing that I keep looking at while watching this trial unfold is, again, how much power Alex still has. And that was very clear when Paul's two friends were testifying. Couldn't have been any more clearer. They looked terrified. Their body language. And Alex was staring them straight dagger eyes. It was like not no tears, just like an evil blank. I would've shook if somebody gave me those eyes, especially somebody who was accused of killing their wife and son. And I think that — I mean, Alex did a lot of people favors and he knows a lot of things about a lot of people. And I think that just the power that he still has is unbelievable and we can't ignore it in this case. And I think that those boys — I think that was a big moment because they're like the younger generation of would-be expected Good Ole Boys. And I think Jim was very surprised, especially — was it Rogan that said that he didn't think any of the boat crash threats were credible?

[00:11:36] **Liz Farrell:** I think both of them sort of said that but I think Will, yeah, it was Will that said that, yeah.

[00:11:41] **Mandy Matney:** I think Jim was very surprised by that. I just took Jim's body language and the way that he was phrasing his questioning. He thought that those witnesses were gonna vouch for Alex and be on their side and ultimately, they weren't. They both said a couple things that were maybe a little bit in Alex's favor but they said the most damning part is that Alex blew his own alibi.

[00:12:02] **Liz Farrell:** Now, does the jury know that alibi, though? That's the thing because we know all this stuff, so when we see contradicting information come out, we can put that in context. But the jury is only learning supposedly. I mean, ideally, they're only learning about this case in real time. So, do they know that Alex lied about his alibi? I don't know that that was brought up yet.

[00:12:22] **Eric Bland:** It's not clear.

[00:12:22] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah.



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[00:12:23] **Eric Bland:** You're exactly right. It's not like somebody's standing before them and said, Alex has said A, B, C, and D. And here this witness said A is wrong.

[00:12:34] **Liz Farrell:** Right.

[00:12:34] **Eric Bland:** B is really wrong. C he was right but he got his timeline wrong by an hour. There's no comparison of what Alex said like split screen, which would be nice.

[00:12:44] **Liz Farrell:** Obviously, the two interviews from June 8th and June 10th, 2021, he tells law enforcement that he was napping. There's just not a person in the room who's saying, see? He lied about his alibi. So, that brings me to a question that a lot of people have, too, which is, Eric, did you notice whether the jury has notepads?

[00:13:00] **Eric Bland:** I did not see anybody with notepads today.

[00:13:03] **Liz Farrell:** How does that work in South Carolina? Do the jurors — is that up to the judge or?

[00:13:07] **Eric Bland:** The foreperson has to make a note to the judge. The judge has read one note I think or two notes already. They usually make a note that said, you know, some of the people have inquired whether we could take notes. Some judges — sua sponte, it's called. "On their own" — will say, I have a note policy that is X. If you want 'em, I'll give 'em to you but you have to leave them in the jury room. You can't take 'em home or you can't even take 'em to the jury room. You gotta leave 'em on your seat. So, I haven't heard any of that yet. In a trial like this, I would recommend taking notes because you don't have that side-by-side comparison. You know, you have 12 people. One person is gonna remember what somebody said on the eighth. One person will remember what somebody said on the 12th. Then, somebody's gonna say, well, no, I don't remember it that way. And you could get in that kind of debate in the jury room. So, notes do help. The danger of taking notes, though, is they take too much or they're too concerned with taking their notes. They're not good like you guys are as journalists where you could take notes and listen at the same time. Most people are tactile and when they start



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taking notes, you know, it becomes white noise what's being talked to them. So, there's good and bad things about taking notes.

[00:14:17] **Liz Farrell:** So, we shouldn't read into that as meaning one thing or another about this jury, whether this jury cares enough or?

[00:14:23] **Eric Bland:** As I told you guys last week, the jury today was really dressed sharp. They really dressed more in business and work attire than if they were just going to, you know, a football game or a party at somebody's house to have burgers. They're starting to take it more seriously, so that's a good thing. But they were clearly frustrated today. You could tell that they're starting to think to themselves, wow, this is gonna be a four to five week trial. I am really gonna lose a lot of touch with my job. I'm sure my bosses are gonna not like this. And they're worried about their kids, their family. So much of their life is passing them by. I mean, can you imagine all you have planned for the next five weeks and if I was to take you out of those plans and just put you in a room and make you sit there and listen to, you know, a bunch of lawyers getting nasty with each other? Dick and Jim are clearly showing a shorter tempered side of the State. If you were just gonna look at the attorneys, I think the State attorneys are more likable. They're different. There's a lot of spice in it. The young woman attorney, she's really sharp.

[00:15:26] **Liz Farrell:** Savanna Goude.

[00:15:27] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah, she's good.

[00:15:27] **Eric Bland:** Then you had this kid today that was talking like a military JAG lawyer and, you know, you got Creighton energy, the way he walks around the courtroom. So, they're giving you a lot of different variables but they're likable people. The defense side, I'm not getting good likable vibes from.

[00:15:42] **Liz Farrell:** No, they're coming off disorganized actually, which is probably the point. So, I wanna go back to the financials, though, because basically, what's happening right now is Judge Newman is hearing from witnesses who are speaking to Alex's alleged financial crimes. And one of them we heard from was Jeanne Seckinger, who was the CFO of PMPED, and she was a witness in Russell Laffitte's trial. That was when we first heard about





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this June 7th confrontation. Now, one thing that was new to us during her testimony was her talking about when she did go to confront Alex on June 7th that he countered her with anger and he was leaning against a file cabinet and said, "What do you want now?" and sort of got ugly with her and gave her a dirty look. So, they went into his office and she basically said, "I want the proof. I need the proof because I have reason to believe that what you're saying isn't true." So, that kind of information is what's coming out right now in front of Judge Newman.

[00:16:40] **Eric Bland:** I think you really had the humanity moment of seeing Tony Satterfield testify this morning. I was supposed to back him up but his victim impact testimony was so impactful that Creighton and I looked at each other and Creighton said, "Look. If you get up, Dick's gonna try to get in your face and it could really minimize or dilute a lot of what Tony talked about" and what Tony talked about in his testimony is the ability of Alex to really steamroll people. I mean, he just — he takes advantage of the vulnerable or the people that are not conversing in the legal system and it was just tragic to see that young man have to talk about that after his mother's death, he was victimized by the very person that his mother really gave her life for. I mean, when you think about it, she probably spent more time with the Murdaugh family almost than she spent with her own children for a 20-year period. And it's just, it was sad.

[00:17:33] **Liz Farrell:** So, what is Judge Newman looking for? Is Judge Newman, in making his decision, is he looking for, you said, clear and convincing evidence that this information shows what pressure Alex was under. Is that what it is?

[00:17:45] **Eric Bland:** It's temporal evidence to show what was on his mind really that could have influenced why he did what he did to Maggie and Paul. I think it's definitely temporal of what Jeanne testified to. I think it's temporal what Jan Malinowski testified to about his PSB dealings and they were tap dancing around, well, the reason he got all these loans and the reason that he never got in default was because Russell Laffitte, who's a convicted felon, was taking other people's money and letting him use it to pay off loans or keep himself current.



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[00:18:17] **Liz Farrell:** You really like saying that, don't you? Russell Laffitte, convicted felon.

[00:18:20] **Eric Bland:** Oh, yeah. It sounds — it rolls off my tongue.

[00:18:22] **Liz Farrell:** Right.

[00:18:23] **Eric Bland:** And then I think Mark Tinsley, his issues with the boating accident and the financial hearing that's coming up is definitely gonna come in. I think the Satterfield case is gonna come in because I think when Mandy wrote her two articles, one with *The Island Packet* in November of 2019 and then April 20, she wrote an article. I think that's the first time that Alex realized oh my goodness. There's something external outside the law firm where other people can put pressure on me, whether it's Mandy, whether she tells through her articles, the Satterfield family. He can't contain it. He can't control it. Inside the law firm, he can control it. He could get mad. He could say I'm busy. He says come back, you know? All these different things. But that Satterfield thing was building in his mind and always on his mind because he took \$3.5 million. So, he's always waiting for the hammer to drop on that. And when Jeanne comes to him that morning of the murders, he's gonna realize that if I can't talk my way out of Chris Wilson and the problem of this fee, they're gonna go look at all my files and then the Satterfield case is gonna blow up and that's why he called Tony after the murders. They did verify. Just want everybody to know, Jim stood up and said, "Are you sure you called Alex in June of 2021?" And Tony said, "Yes, I am." And he said, "You sure?" Well, the minute that hearing was over with, the SLED officer came over to me and asked for Tony's phone number and I gave it to him. He went and searched the records. Tony made a phone call to Alex I believe he said on June 19th or June 20th and that's when Alex talked to him and told him everything's fine. There is gonna be some settlement money coming in and I expect it to come in through the end of the year. He didn't say "I have the money for you now" because as we know, what we found out from Jan, he was trying to get the money to put it back into the bank account of Chris Wilson because the law firm said, "Where is that money?" And he lied and said the money was in Chris Wilson's law firm. And so, he pushed Tony off and said, "I believe the money's gonna come in at the end of the year." So, I think that's all temporal.



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[00:20:39] **Mandy Matney:** So, with Tony Satterfield, yeah. I mean, I was blown away by his testimony. I've talked to him before. Both of those boys are just so sweet and such good-hearted people. And what I keep going back to is just that if Alex just would've given them a portion of that \$500,000 to begin with, just a little bit of it, none of this would've happened because —

[00:21:04] **Eric Bland:** You could have written your article and the family would've said we got paid.

[00:21:08] **Mandy Matney:** Right. Exactly.

[00:21:09] **Liz Farrell:** Right.

[00:21:10] **Mandy Matney:** And that's that. But they saw, oh my gosh, \$500,000 settlement. Alex is telling me that it's gonna be a while or whatever that there's no settlement and that's strange. What's going on here? I need to talk to a lawyer. And I just keep going back to that. Just pure greed that he could have just given them a little bit.

[00:21:31] **Liz Farrell:** What happened after they saw your article, Mandy, the Satterfield family?

[00:21:35] **Eric Bland:** I can tell you what he told 'em. Ginger read it. She called Eric. Eric spoke to Alex and Alex said, "No, it's not totally correct. We're still in the process of it" and that bought him like another year. And then after the murders, it started popping up again. But, yeah. That's it. Ginger read Mandy's article and, again, like I've always said before, Mandy opened up the can of whoop-ass on the financial stuff. And without the Satterfields coming forward, I'm not sure what really would've come out in the fall of 2021. Do you — are you, guys — are you sure what you think would've come out in the fall of 2021 but for Satterfields?

[00:22:11] **Liz Farrell:** I don't know. I mean, I think that PMPED would've probably been able to keep a tighter lid on the \$792,000 anomaly and then whatever the origin story is of them discovering that Alex was stealing from clients. But I also — I think we've come to the conclusion that your entrance onto the scene in late August was also sort of what propelled them to confront that, whether or not they know that themselves.



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[00:22:35] **Eric Bland:** I was troubled by what Jeanne said. We shelved it. I had a lot of stuff on my desk to do at the time. We shelved the inquiry into the Chris Wilson money and then we returned to it 700 some thousand dollars of income. Who — what business would shelve it for two months? I mean —

[00:22:51] **Liz Farrell:** I'll tell you who: a business whose employee had his wife and son killed. That's who. I mean, that's gonna be Mark Tinsley's point on Monday I think, which is that this stuff worked, like the murders did have — they were effective to accomplish some of the things that might have been on Alex's mind, such as the boat crash. Killing Paul effectively removed the Murdaughs at that point in time I would say, anyway, in June 2021. It seemed like the Murdaughs' involvement in the boat crash case was going to be over because Paul's death and Maggie's death. No jury in Hampton County's going to deal Alex another blow by awarding all this money to the Beach family, so that was effective. And then, obviously, we know what you just said, that for two months they put it on a shelf. But you guys remember that she didn't just say that. She was talking also about he's still a hundred — was it \$125,000 from Randy Murdaugh, his own brother?

[00:23:45] **Eric Bland:** It was horrible.

[00:23:45] **Liz Farrell:** Because he took his paycheck.

[00:23:46] **Mandy Matney:** And said that it was an accident.

[00:23:48] **Eric Bland:** I would beat my brother Robbie's ass. I got a brother, Robbie. I would beat his ass if he took a \$125,000 check.

[00:23:56] **Mandy Matney:** That is a — and, again, every time they'd casually mention these numbers, it is insane to everyone else. 99.9% of the world does — never sees that kind of money and could possibly be so casual about it. That's four times the median income of Hampton, something like that. It's crazy. Like it's crazy.

[00:24:20] **Eric Bland:** Yeah. \$125,00.



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[00:24:23] **Liz Farrell:** Did you guys notice who did actually have respect for money was Chris Wilson? Because he was freaking out.

[00:24:29] **Eric Bland:** Oh, he got pissed.

[00:24:30] **Liz Farrell:** He was so freaked out that — yeah. The \$192,000.

[00:24:34] **Eric Bland:** He was not so concerned about Alex, God forbid, offing himself in September. He was really concerned with when are you going to give me my damn money? How about, Alex, I take 790,000 from you and I repay you 600 and it's okay? You know, I'll get it to you later. I mean, that's a hell of a repayment when you take 790 and I give you back 600. The way these guys just —

[00:24:59] **Liz Farrell:** But that's further proof that he couldn't cobble that together. He couldn't cobble together \$792,000 to pay PMPED back. It's further proof that this was a problem for him. And then also, Chris Wilson went to PMPED and asked for the money back.

[00:25:12] **Mandy Matney:** Okay. But like hold on. I wanna pause here. Couple things. I noticed an overwhelming amount of comments that were sympathetic toward Chris yesterday. And Eric, I wanna ask you. The story that he was telling about how Alex duped him and how Alex told him to not pay the law firm to just pay him directly, is that believable?

[00:25:35] **Eric Bland:** It is not because there's a fee agreement between PMPED and Chris Wilson's law firm. When you have a contingency fee in South Carolina, which means the client doesn't pay and I don't get a fee unless I recover money. It's not an hourly fee case. Hourly fee cases do not have to be in writing but under our rules of professional conduct, contingency fees do. And so, there's a contingency fee agreement that shows that PMPED and Chris Wilson are gonna share in a contingent fee. When that fee comes in, he is an escrow agent for PMPED. It belongs to them and he either parked the fee in his trust account or he did not pay PMPED as per contract. Parking the fee in his trust account is wrong. Now, somebody told a lie because Alex supposedly told Jeanne it's in Chris' trust account and supposedly Chris confirmed it's still in his trust account. But then in August, a copy of the check



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showed it never was in Chris' trust account. So, who's lying here? Chris does not get a free pass for this, guys.

[00:26:45] **Mandy Matney:** Okay. Yeah. And that's the elephant in the room. And that's the problem with a lot of these witnesses here. I was telling, Liz. It's very hard to explain. It's like something that's bubbling that no one is talking about. But witnesses like Chris Wilson, the State wants them to be incredibly credible because it helps their case. However, Chris did something wrong and Chris also benefited from the criminal world that Alex created and Chris' back is against the wall. Like Chris needs to do everything that he possibly can to make the State happy and to keep his law license.

[00:27:20] **Eric Bland:** I mean, I don't know the circumstances of that, but you, that's, you know more of that than me.

[00:27:25] **Liz Farrell:** Yeah. I don't know. Can we clarify that? Do we know what he did was ethically wrong or legally wrong?

[00:27:30] **Mandy Matney:** In South Carolina, if you — so, you're saying that his, the, what is it, payment?

[00:27:35] **Eric Bland:** The contingent fee agreement was with Chris Wilson with — the fee agreement was between Chris and PMPED. As a lawyer in PMPED, you can't make the fee agreement between you personally and the client. If you're a member of the firm, it's a fee agreement between PMPED. So, when Chris gets money in, if this is how it happened, he's under an escrow duty to guard and safeguard that portion of the fee, which he is contractually bound to give to PMPED. Alex comes to him and says, no, I wanted you to pay it to me personally. Now, Chris is gonna say Alex is a partner. He has apparent authority — I guess to modify that fee agreement — so I send him the money. I don't know the facts close enough but he probably should not have paid that over to Alex individually.

[00:28:31] **Liz Farrell:** So, he has not been accused of a crime and he — we don't know if he's being investigated by the Office of Disciplinary Counsel.

[00:28:40] **Eric Bland:** Correct.



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[00:28:40] **Liz Farrell:** But you're saying that there possibly are ethical or violations of the rules of professional conduct.

[00:28:46] **Eric Bland:** I'm saying there could be contractual violations. I don't know enough of the facts. Contractually, his fee agreement is, together with the firm, is with the client. They owe duties to the client. Now, the client's gonna say I really don't care because the 40%, I don't care if you whack it up 20 ways, 10 ways, or whatever. I just want my 60. The problem is there's a contractual relationship between PMPED and Chris' firm if the fee agreement was written in writing and it should have been. It has to be under South Carolina Rules of Professional Conduct.

[00:29:17] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah. I would just like it investigated. I feel like his name has come up enough in this situation and South Carolina just needs to take this stuff very seriously.

[00:29:25] **Eric Bland:** Well, you saw who came into court with him yesterday, didn't you?

[00:29:28] **Mandy Matney:** Who? Ronnie?

[00:29:29] **Eric Bland:** No, there was four. He had four lawyers with him yesterday. Pete Strom, Bakari Sellers, a female lawyer from Pete Strom's firm, and then John Alphin from Pete Strom's firm. He had four lawyers supporting him yesterday.

[00:29:43] **Liz Farrell:** Well, that's what's interesting to me because when you have four lawyers and one of them is Pete Strom, it indicates to me that you are in trouble somewhere. So, there's probably, like Mandy says, there's probably a lot more to this story.

[00:29:55] **Eric Bland:** Do you want me to tell the audience who Pete Strom is?

[00:29:57] **Liz Farrell:** You can tell. Yeah. Go ahead.

[00:29:58] **Eric Bland:** Pete Strom comes from the strongest J. Edgar Hoover director of SLED that our state has ever seen. His father, J. P. Strom, was the J.



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Edgar Hoover of SLED for 40, 50 years. He was the most powerful law enforcement officer and probably the most powerful person in the state. Pete, as his offspring went to law school, became a very successful criminal defense lawyer. He worked in the solicitor's office I believe at the time that Dick was a solicitor. Then got out. Then he became US Attorney of South Carolina, the US District Attorney of South Carolina. And then now, he's out and he's one of the most successful class action lawyers in our state. He took on SCANA and Santee Cooper. An extremely successful lawyer at this point.

[00:30:54] **Liz Farrell:** So, who hires him?

[00:30:55] **Eric Bland:** Well, he does a lot of major national class action. But at the same time, he represents a lot of important people who are in trouble because of his relationship that he's built up over years. I mean, incredible relationships. He's been the former US attorney. He's in the solicitor's office. His father was beyond powerful. If you're in trouble, the natural thing is you're not gonna go hire Eric Bland. You're gonna hire Pete Strom.

[00:31:21] **Liz Farrell:** Right. So, Bakari Sellers is actually I believe representing Chris Wilson directly and he's part of that firm. And he is — who hires Bakari Sellers? What kind of person? Like what — is it powerful people?

[00:31:33] **Eric Bland:** The same kind of people. Bakari used to be in the House of Representatives. He's a national commentator for CNN. He also was responsible for a lot of the SCANA litigation. He's now suing the cheer and tumble place in Greenville. His father is a legendary civil rights activist who was in the Orangeburg Massacre.

[00:31:55] **Mandy Matney:** Powerful people.

[00:31:55] **Eric Bland:** Power gravitates towards power. It doesn't gravitate to somebody like Eric Bland. That's just a reality. I'm telling you.

[00:32:02] **Mandy Matney:** Well — and these circles are so small 'cause Bakari and Dick are also close.

[00:32:07] **Eric Bland:** Politically close. Correct.





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[00:32:09] **Mandy Matney:** I hear they're friends, too. I know that.

[00:32:12] **Eric Bland:** Oh, yeah. I would say so. I would absolutely agree on that.

[00:32:14] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah. And, I mean, there's just — I think my point with Chris Wilson is like I have a really hard time feeling sorry for him. And somebody who's educated, somebody who has a law degree being fooled and somebody who has a lot of privilege and power in the way that Chris Wilson does. He's a successful lawyer. I mean, he was saying he wasn't as successful as Alex but I don't think a lot of people make \$13 million in nine years.

[00:32:42] **Eric Bland:** Chris is very successful. Don't let him down-talk himself.

[00:32:46] **Mandy Matney:** Right.

[00:32:51] **Eric Bland:** And we'll be right back.

[00:33:01] **Mandy Matney:** Something else that I've had a problem with while watching this unfold is, okay, look. The crime scene was not perfect. I think the biggest problem that I have is that hearing the amount of PMPED lawyers, family members, etc. who were at Moselle at the house the next day plus Chris Wilson. Yeah, the whole gang, which by the way, why weren't they all communicating with each other, like, huh. A lot of missing fees.

[00:33:28] **Eric Bland:** What do you mean, Mandy, that you don't think the crime scene is perfect? I got two things that I'll talk to you about after but I wanna hear what you say. What do you mean by that?

[00:33:35] **Mandy Matney:** No crime scene is perfect and I realize that.

[00:33:38] **Eric Bland:** Right.

[00:33:38] **Mandy Matney:** And it's gonna be, it's —

[00:33:40] **Eric Bland:** Right.



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[00:33:40] **Mandy Matney:** Every single crime scene, no matter what, there's gonna be problems. But I think the number one problem that I have with that crime scene is that the solicitor's office was involved. And that is something that no one is bringing up because it is the prosecution's problem because Duffie Stone refused to recuse himself on day one and he had the ability to send his investigators on scene. Now, granted, Dylan Hightower did have a decent testimony but still. It's just so incestuous and it feels so wrong that the guy who ended up being one of the guys to download Alex's phone was Alex's co-worker, essentially. I mean, I don't — South Carolina's small but it's not that small. And I feel like that SLED could have done more to protect the integrity of that crime scene. I don't think that they messed up beyond — I don't think they blew the case but I feel like it could have been better.

[00:34:37] **Eric Bland:** I thought Dick's most effective cross-examination that he's done the whole trial was on this morning when he said, "Now, let me get this straight. He didn't take a fingerprint off the doorknob into the closet? There's blood all over the closet. You didn't take any fingerprints in that closet?" I thought that was very, very strong and very powerful and I was critical of the crime scene evidence gatherer who wouldn't do that. And I also was really had a problem with nobody tested the drains on those showers and in those sinks.

[00:35:11] **Liz Farrell:** Well, do we know that yet? We just know that the people that have testified so far were not the people to have done that. I assume, obviously, Dick has some insight into he's asking that question because he knows something. But now, the one SLED agent, Katie McAllister, this SLED agent is doing a search of the house. It's for evidence and she's got John Marvin and Lee Cope from PMPED with her. How is that not a problem.

[00:35:34] **Mandy Matney:** Right.

[00:35:34] **Liz Farrell:** How is it that these guys — you know, you heard Special Agent Jeff Croft when he was collecting the spent cartridges outside of the gun room.

[00:35:43] **Eric Bland:** Staring at her.



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[00:35:44] **Liz Farrell:** He's on his body camera and he's telling the other SLED agent, "We gotta do this discreetly." Why do you have to do it discreetly? Because inside the room just feet away is the entire partnership of PMPED and Chris Wilson and the family. So —

[00:35:58] **Mandy Matney:** And it's the gun room. It should have been locked down.

[00:36:02] **Eric Bland:** You ever see on TV when the guy comes home from work and there's yellow tape around the house and a murder took place in the house and the officers are holding him back? My wife and kids are in there. You let me through. And they won't even let him. They won't let that guy in the house.

[00:36:21] **Mandy Matney:** And he can't get in.

[00:36:22] **Eric Bland:** But four — five lawyers or four lawyers and John Marvin can sit and play pinochle on the couch in the living room while a search warrant is being executed. A search warrant, by the way, by only one person. That troubled me, too. One person in the entire house.

[00:36:40] **Mandy Matney:** And then, she was searching with John Marvin and Lee Cope, leaving her being like, you should check this out.

[00:36:47] **Eric Bland:** Helping her.

[00:36:47] **Mandy Matney:** That is crazy. That's insanity. And I also didn't like when Dylan Hightower right off the bat when he —

[00:36:54] **Liz Farrell:** Right.

[00:36:54] **Mandy Matney:** Testified, he said something along the line — there was a lot of lawyers on that scene. And it's like, huh. Why were there a lot of lawyers? And what prosecutor was calling the shots here?

[00:37:05] **Liz Farrell:** Who was in charge? That's the question.



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[00:37:06] **Mandy Matney:** Who was in charge and why did they allow PMPED on that scene?

[00:37:11] **Liz Farrell:** That crime scene, Rogan Gibson testified that he basically just walked on it at about eight o'clock that morning. Like no one stopped him. He just went right in. And the other thing is that it seemed to have shut down rather quickly just — and I'm not a crime scene expert, obviously. But it seems to me that you would want more time there to look around given that it's 1,770 acres so. But, yeah. That's very problematic. So, I find it very rich that when Dick Harpootlian is questioning a SLED agent about, did you do this? Did you do that? And it's like, well, what was that like for 'cause she can't — this is the thing and this is the Good Ole Boys system that we keep talking about. These people don't feel secure to speak up and say let me do my job. Get out of the way. Get outta here. Why weren't there handcuffs out? Why weren't there — if you don't get out of our way, we're gonna, there's gonna be a problem. Why was there none of that?

[00:38:00] **Mandy Matney:** The power of PMPED. And it's just annoying.

[00:38:03] **Liz Farrell:** That's right.

[00:38:04] **Mandy Matney:** It's just annoying because I think — I'm rooting for the prosecution. There's no lies there. But it's frustrating watching them and they can't point out some of this stuff because they were kind of complicit. I mean, their side was complicit. SLED was not perfect and SLED did not treat that crime scene like they would've any other crime scene and I think that that's a huge problem and I hate that that goes into Dick's favor.

[00:38:35] **Eric Bland:** Then let me ask you two this. I don't understand — I do understand that necessary to quell the fear of the public but why would that statement be made the next day? And Dick and Jim are gonna really focus on that in their closing argument.

[00:38:50] **Liz Farrell:** As a former public information officer, I'll tell you what. That is what you say as a police agency when the victim himself is telling you that this was a targeted attack. Alex said it from the very beginning with the 911 operator. He said it to the detective, the SLED agent, in the June 8th interview. He said it again in the June 10th interview. He said it to this Sgt.



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Greene from the Colleton County Sheriff's Office as soon as he got on the scene. So, you have him saying that this is connected to the boat crash, to all those people. So, Colleton County Sheriff's Office, their responsibility is to the public. Is the public safe, right? You're not gonna make them think there's a killer on the loose when Alex himself is telling them this is connected to that. That's what I believe. It wasn't a random attack. And that doesn't mean that they were targeting Alex because they put out that. Now, did we all read into that at the time? Like they know who — they have an idea of who it is. Well, yeah. They had an idea of who it was because Alex was telling them it was the boat crash. It was a vigilante killing. That's what he was saying. That's what the family was saying.

[00:39:55] **Eric Bland:** Is that why they took the buccal swab of the boys?

[00:39:57] **Liz Farrell:** Who were the boys?

[00:39:59] **Eric Bland:** You know, Connor Cook and all the other kids.

[00:40:01] **Liz Farrell:** Oh, yeah. Yeah.

[00:40:02] **Eric Bland:** Okay.

[00:40:03] **Mandy Matney:** Well, they volunteered. The boat crash kids volunteered and — because they knew. I mean, it was so — the boat crash theory, that they had something to do with it, spread like wildfire in Hampton and on the internet really quick and I think all those kids were just like, we wanna get out of this as soon as possible. Let's volunteer. But —

[00:40:31] **Liz Farrell:** Also, they know the Murdaughs and they know that probably on some level.

[00:40:35] **Mandy Matney:** Right. Like I need to prove that I didn't do this. So, whatever I can do there, let me help going back to that statement, as a reporter for a decade, I heard that a million times when they didn't have the suspect in custody or a suspect really in mind. I mean, it's just a standard kind of thing that a lot of, especially smaller town PIOs say. It's — a lot of times it just means that there's not a shooter on the loose like.



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[00:41:04] **Liz Farrell:** Right. That's what it means.

[00:41:06] **Eric Bland:** That's a better way of saying it. That is exactly how it should have been explained by whoever was questioned in that trial.

[00:41:13] **Mandy Matney:** Right.

[00:41:14] **Eric Bland:** Exactly the way you two just explained it.

[00:41:16] **Liz Farrell:** That's not their responsibility.

[00:41:17] **Eric Bland:** But they didn't explain it that way. Somebody should have educated them.

[00:41:20] **Liz Farrell:** How can they? I'm telling you. The sheriff's deputies that are on the stand, this is why they're asking questions of people that don't possibly have the answer. Those sheriff's deputies on the stand do not have anything to do with public information in the way it's disseminated from the sheriff's office. That is either a collateral duty of another deputy or it's a civilian job.

[00:41:38] **Eric Bland:** Then it's up to Creighton and it puts somebody like you guys on there to be able to explain it.

[00:41:43] **Liz Farrell:** If you think — I mean, do you really think that that's that powerful? That that's —

[00:41:47] **Eric Bland:** Oh, I think that — can Jim or — ? Yeah, that's a major thrust of their defense; that Dick's gonna say there's a killer out there.

[00:41:53] **Liz Farrell:** Well, that's embarrassing for them.

[00:41:55] **Eric Bland:** There's a killer on the loose.

[00:41:57] **Liz Farrell:** Their own client is the one who told the sheriff's office that there wasn't. That it was the — it was targeted so.



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[00:42:04] **Eric Bland:** I got it but that's not what came out in the trial.

[00:42:06] **Liz Farrell:** Yeah.

[00:42:06] **Eric Bland:** The other 800-pound gorilla that I think we need to talk about is why would Jim let Alex be interviewed two times after the initial statement when the police put him in the car and we saw the car interview?

[00:42:21] **Liz Farrell:** Because Jim is not in charge of Alex. Jim is not. Neither is Dick.

[00:42:26] **Eric Bland:** I've talked to 15 defense lawyers who said they would've never done it. Jim wouldn't have gotten a copy already to see what Alex said in the police car that night. He wouldn't have understood the crime scene in a day and a half. You would never let your client sit down under that circumstance because whatever your client says during those three interviews in June becomes in cement. They're words you can't take back. And I don't understand it. What would be the reason? Did Jim and Alex believe that Alex could talk his way out of it? Is that what was gonna happen?

[00:43:05] **Liz Farrell:** That's gonna be part of it. I think that this is it. You saw that — okay, so SLED didn't kick out people that were on the property during their search. They didn't clear the property. They didn't assert themselves, right? Well, neither did Jim Griffin. Jim Griffin didn't assert himself with Alex to say this is a bad — he probably said this is a bad idea and Alex's like it's okay because Alex's used to talking his way out of things. But Alex is in charge. And I've been looking in the courtroom to see if that is still happening. Like if Dick and Jim are still — I mean, I don't know about Dick to a certain extent but I know that Alex calls the shots. I don't see them having any sort of ability over him, so I wouldn't put that on Jim at all, honestly. Like I think that sucks for Jim.

[00:43:51] **Eric Bland:** Guess what? I saw Alex walking in the courtroom this morning. Alex opened up the door, the sheriffs did and he walked in. He had two major expandable files under each arm. So, you are correct — that he is reading everything right and offering probably his legal advice. I mean, he came in with two big 12-inch expandable files under his arms. Like he was carrying, you know, you know, two football dumps.



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[00:44:19] **Liz Farrell:** I wouldn't say he's offering his own legal advice. I would say he's probably offering excuses and stories.

[00:44:26] **Mandy Matney:** He looks like he's playing lawyer.

[00:44:28] **Liz Farrell:** Right.

[00:44:29] **Mandy Matney:** Like he has all of the props and the Ben Franklin glasses.

[00:44:33] **Liz Farrell:** Which brings us to the next point.

[00:44:35] **Eric Bland:** How many times do you think Dick turned to him and said "Why don't you shut up?" during the trial? I wish we could have had a count on that 'cause —

[00:44:42] **Liz Farrell:** None. Do you really think so?

[00:44:43] **Eric Bland:** Oh, no. No. You're wrong about that. Oh, yeah. I know Dick would say it. Now, whether Jim would say it's — yeah, I know. I know.

[00:44:50] **Liz Farrell:** So, Mandy, you were talking about this earlier before we started recording and I think this is the perfect time to talk about it. Back to what you were saying earlier when we started talking about the elephant in the room, which is the power of the Good — this shows the power of the Good Ole Boys but there's been several people who are watching this trial have pointed out a couple things. One is how Alex enters and exits the courtroom and how that is not something that anyone else in his similar position as a murder defendant would be able to do. There's the chewing gum and eating tic tacs openly in the court. There's the thanking Rogan Gibson as he walks by, so he is communicating with these people. And then there's the chit-chat hour afterward with his family. He literally held up his hand and said "One minute."

[00:45:36] **Mandy Matney:** Touching them.

[00:45:37] **Liz Farrell:** And touching them.





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[00:45:38] **Eric Bland:** And touching them. Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. He's touching them. You can never ever, I'm telling you, a defendant can never ever make contact.

[00:45:49] **Liz Farrell:** Wow.

[00:45:50] **Eric Bland:** The deputies don't let him do eye contact, let alone voice contact, certainly never touching contact. And I think he's chewing sunflower seeds, by the way.

[00:45:59] **Liz Farrell:** Is that worse or better? I don't know. Was he at a baseball game?

[00:46:02] **Eric Bland:** It's horrible. I don't understand. You can't — no. A lawyer can't chew gum in a courtroom. And certainly a litigate can't chew gum in a courtroom.

[00:46:10] **Mandy Matney:** That's true. A journalist would get kicked out for that.

[00:46:12] **Liz Farrell:** Oh, absolutely.

[00:46:15] **Mandy Matney:** But, yeah. I mean, I just think that that is the — that's a really hard mountain for Creighton to climb and cover is explaining in a factual way and getting witnesses to testify as to the amount of power and fear that the Murdaughs have over people. And that is also — at the end of the day, I'm at the point where I've heard enough in this case and that I think there's plenty to get a guilty verdict. However, you just never know with a Colleton County jury and you never know — I mean, that is the wild card here. And I don't know if it should have been tried somewhere else. And we've all explained that and gone through that. And I don't think if we would've gone across the state to Greenville or Columbia that he would be able to have those loosey-goosey rules in the courtroom. I don't think so.

[00:47:15] **Eric Bland:** No way.



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[00:47:16] **Liz Farrell:** I think that's a good point. So, when he like waves off the two guards, the two deputies that are supposed to be escorting him out of the room, that in and of itself shows you that sort of fear and power that he has that who — tell me what other defendant, honestly, like what other defendant out there is able to tell the deputies that are supposed to walk him out of the courtroom to hold on a second. I'm talking to people. Like that is just the most wild thing to me. We'll be right back.

[00:47:54] **Eric Bland:** I think the state has done an amazing job improving a circumstantial murder case to date. Now, we haven't had GSR yet. We haven't had blood yet. We haven't had closed evidence yet. But to date, as far as circumstantial evidence goes, I think they've done a masterful job by proving their case by Alex's lies. Twisting his own words against him. However.

[00:48:24] **Liz Farrell:** For sure.

[00:48:25] **Eric Bland:** I'm very concerned that the motive will not be able to jump over the high jump bar. I think it may be they may just hit the bar. They may not get their whole body over it. And I know the judge is gonna instruct the jury motive is not an element of murder and you should not consider it in your deliberations. So, I want to ask you two. If the motive — it's not gonna be flat but maybe it doesn't pass over the high bar. Is it still going to be enough to convict him or do you see a hung jury?

[00:49:02] **Mandy Matney:** Well, I mean, I think it's still very early on and I did see a big change in public reaction this week, especially after the phone guy testified and they played the Snapchat video just catching Alex in a lie. The — I felt a big shift in it went from what is the State doing? They look like a bunch of idiots to whoa! Alex is definitely a liar. What is he capable of? And that's people that aren't MMP followers. That's just random people on Twitter 'cause at the beginning, I mean, it was bad. The first few days, I feel like people that just were tuning into this trial were like, it was 100% go defense. Alex looks innocent. It was weird.

[00:49:59] **Eric Bland:** I hear that every night, Mandy. Every single night on TV, I'm the only one out there. Believe me. I'm the only one out there that is touting the prosecution's case. Everybody I go up against, whether it's in



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*NewsNation, Cuomo, whether it's NBC, whether it's Court TV, everybody thinks he's all he's innocent.*

[00:50:21] **Mandy Matney:** Well, and that's a lot of defense attorneys that just wanna be on team defense, too. I just think that — I think this, the case, the State's case, is much stronger than I thought it would be. And we can't also underestimate the likability of Team Creighton in all of the, I mean, a majority of the law enforcement officers were very credible, were very just likable. And I think that all of that is gonna add up to — I just don't see how it is plausible that anybody besides Alex could be responsible for this. I'm seeing doubts but I'm not seeing reasonable doubts.

[00:51:06] **Eric Bland:** Do you think there could have been another person there with him, Liz?

[00:51:10] **Liz Farrell:** No. But first, I wanna — I don't know actually, but let me answer the first question that you asked because one of the things that's hard right now is that the State isn't connecting the dots, right? And I assume that that in the course of the trial, they will get to the part where they start having more analysis rather I suppose than — right now, it just feels like they've given us a raw printout, like a printout of raw data, and there's things in there that we can like identify as like, whoa, that's when the temperature spiked or whatever. But we need somebody to interpret that data for the jury, right? And there needs to be some cohesive narrative that comes together because I've seen the questions out there. For instance, it's very confusing about the Blackout guns because — and it's very confusing about the guns in general. And obviously, Jim Griffin wants it that way because the jury will be confused. But there are things there that once you untie it, like once you untangle it, it's so easy to explain. And kind of like with the two shooter theory, Mandy and I never really — we never really thought that that was a thing because it made sense. He grabbed — if he did it — he grabbed a shotgun — bang, bang — has no more ammunition, then he grabs the Blackout.

[00:52:25] **Eric Bland:** Outta shells.

[00:52:26] **Liz Farrell:** Exactly. Then, he grabs the Blackout. And this is a family that drives around with guns. This is a family with a lot of guns on their property. And as they've said themselves, Paul scattered those guns



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everywhere. And not for nothing, Alex and Paul were driving around that day with guns. So, that's one point. But the — so, the State needs to make this all come together. I think that's part of it. And so, going to your question about motive. This is the thing and I've said this on Twitter. On June 7th, Alex was under a lot of pressure. So, we had the obstruction of justice case in which his financials had been subpoenaed. So, this is for the boat crash case, so he knew probably knew that he was under investigation and it was out of his, like you said, his comfort zone of the 14th Circuit. It's now with the state grand jury, so this is different. You have that. You have the \$792,000 fee. You have the years of alleged stealing. You have that the boat crash happened. And we cannot underestimate, Mandy and I talk about this all the time, this family was not used to being under scrutiny one bit, so this was new to them. So, 2019, the social media, the people saying, and the people starting to spill the tea on the Murdaughs and saying, hey, they did this and they do that and you should watch out for them this, this way and that way. So, this is all new. Then you add to it that Mandy finds this document with the \$500,000 settlement spelled out. That goes in the paper not once, but twice. Now, you have, okay, like you said, external fear, right? There's an external issue here he cannot control. It's out of his control. You add to that that Randolph was deathly ill for real this time for — I don't know for people that don't know this. Randolph was sick for quite a while. The last few years of his life, in fact, people were bracing for him to pass away. But in April of 2021, he was told that he was terminal and now, Alex has to face the possibility of a life without his fixer, without his dad. He worshipped his dad. That's his savior. You have the fact that Paul's behavior is getting worse. Mandy especially has a lot of sources who have attested to the fact that Paul was drinking more. He was continuing to drive boats and cars and what have you, so Paul was a walking liability. And then, you have Mark Tinsley the Allendale attorney without even a website. He's a mystery to a lot of people, right? And you think that he is a Good Ole Boy in the sense that he's from Allendale. He's from the 14th Circuit. He knows Alex. He knows all these guys. They respect him. I don't think that Alex thought in his wildest dreams that Mark Tinsley was actually going to go for it. Like no one else has gone for it with a Murdaugh. No one else has gone for it with a PMPED attorney the way Mark has. So, Mark says —

[00:55:08] **Eric Bland:** What about Eric? Eric and Ronnie.

[00:55:11] **Liz Farrell:** Sorry. Eric and Ronnie. Before Mark.



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[00:55:14] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah. At this point.

[00:55:15] **Liz Farrell:** Can you name one before Mark?

[00:55:16] **Eric Bland:** No.

[00:55:17] **Liz Farrell:** So, you have this thing where now they don't know what is Mark gonna do, right? So, Mark tells him, if you mess with this jury in Hampton County, I am going to sue Maggie and Paul in Beaufort County where you have limited control over the outcomes — suing Maggie because Paul used her credit card that night at the, to buy the alcohol and also because of the permissiveness of her parenting and allowing Paul to drink and drive. So, that scared Alex, right? And then, you have the financials that he has run out the clock. He has no more time. The judge is probably gonna rule in Mark's favor and Alex is gonna have to provide a list of his bank accounts and such. I know that Dick has underplayed this but that is a problem. And then, you have to add too —

[00:56:01] **Eric Bland:** I wish you'd write all this to Creighton. Please put this down and I'll send it to Creighton.

[00:56:07] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah, it's in a — well, Liz has a really good Twitter thread on this.

[00:56:11] **Eric Bland:** So, please send this to me.

[00:56:13] **Liz Farrell:** I will. This is the motive, right?

[00:56:15] **Eric Bland:** Please.

[00:56:15] **Liz Farrell:** So, when you're talking, and then you're talking about the sympathy. You're talking about the deference. He was eliminating two problems and then you have to add the temper. We've got a temper on this guy.

[00:56:24] **Mandy Matney:** And lots of guns.



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[00:56:24] **Liz Farrell:** And that is not talked about. And lots of guns and he's desperate. And Maggie texted. She said he wasn't sleeping, so you have got — and he says he's a drug addict. So, this guy is possibly off his head.

[00:56:39] **Eric Bland:** Let me add two things. You, what you just said was a brilliant recitation of it. It's not just one through five. You rattled off 13 things, which are extremely compelling in their singularity but in their totality are overwhelming. I have been at Moselle. There is zero chance that there would be no guns down by the kennels. Nobody is going to go to the kennels with hunting dogs. And I saw snakes out there. Without having guns out there 'cause they don't want rattlesnakes coming in and messing with the dogs. You're not gonna drive all the way back to the house, a third of a mile or 950 yards, to get guns. So, they had guns at the kennels — plenty of guns — because they'll hop on an ATV if they see a deer. And they'll go in the cornfield or in the dove field and shoot a deer. They're not gonna get on the ATV and go back to the house to get a gun. There's guns already there. I will say what my partner Ronnie Richter, who goes every night in the studio in Charleston, he said, "I like the State's case but I'm concerned that every time a witness comes up, more questions seem to come about than answers." So, the State, when they put up a witness, has to start closing it. That's exactly what you said by connecting the dots. They can't leave things open because it's a five-week trial Ronnie said. And if you have something that's still open from week one, you may not be able to connect it in week three. Don't wait till week three to put the witness on that's coming nine witnesses down the road to make that connection. If you got an open hole, fill it quickly. That's all Ronnie's saying. Those are the two things I wanted to say.

[00:58:26] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah. And one thing I wanted to add to that like as we're talking about the motive and I saw something on Twitter and I've been saying this for a while but like a lot of murder motives don't make a lot of sense to the average human being. Like you killed her, you killed your wife because you're having 'cause she was having an affair? Like that doesn't make sense and —

[00:58:51] **Eric Bland:** Something like that, God forbid.

[00:58:53] **Mandy Matney:** Right or.



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[00:58:54] **Eric Bland:** You're right about that. I forgot about that, Mandy. That's true.

[00:58:56] **Mandy Matney:** Or like — and I feel like Creighton needs to make this to the judge, a lot of times, affairs especially are a part of murder trials because that's what led to the motive. Blah, blah, blah. And this is very similar. It's pressure. It's a man's mess he's trying to cover up and distract from. And the — and a lot of murder motives are along that line, so this is not that different.

[00:59:20] **Eric Bland:** I like that.

[00:59:20] **Mandy Matney:** His life is falling apart and it's —

[00:59:24] **Eric Bland:** Put that in a memo, Mandy. Put in addition to what Liz says. No, I'm serious.

[00:59:28] **Liz Farrell:** We're doing a memo, I guess.

[00:59:29] **Mandy Matney:** We have homework tonight.

[00:59:31] **Liz Farrell:** Dear Creighton.

[00:59:33] **Eric Bland:** Mandy. I had not thought about it. I had not thought about it, but you're right. Some murders defy credulity. Like really? That's what got you upset? You came home and you killed your spouse over that?

[00:59:46] **Mandy Matney:** Right.

[00:59:47] **Liz Farrell:** So, there's one thing that I read about about Brian Walshe — not to keep bringing Brian Walshe into this — but Brian Walshe, the guy who chopped up his wife allegedly in Massachusetts. I read an expert that said that him chopping up his wife, if he did it, is not the sign of a psychopath, which is sort of hard for us to understand, right? Because that's sort of a psychopath. Like who would do that? It's problem solving. It's that simple. He was solving a problem. He had to get the body outta the house.



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[01:00:10] **Eric Bland:** Right.

[01:00:11] **Liz Farrell:** So, Alex, none of this makes sense but — and I do actually believe he might be a psychopath but none of this makes sense but.

[01:00:18] **Mandy Matney:** Because we're not murderers.

[01:00:19] **Liz Farrell:** It could be that he was solving a problem.

[01:00:22] **Eric Bland:** That is great. That's another thing that's gotta go in the memo, Liz. Problem solving. I never even thought of that even.

[01:00:29] **Liz Farrell:** Title for episode: Dear Creighton.

[01:00:31] **Mandy Matney:** Right. And it is problem solving. The men who murder their wives for insurance money — that doesn't make sense to most people either. Like you killed her for \$30,000? Why didn't you just get another job? Like that doesn't make any sense to people either.

[01:00:46] **Eric Bland:** This is the greatest podcast because I just got my talking point tonight from you, Liz. Problem solving. And Mandy, I got a motive. You don't really need a clean, good motive. Some motives are just stupid, so I got that, too. The stupid motive theory.

[01:01:00] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah. And they just don't — they just don't make sense to the average person. I can't remember the last time I've been like, oh. I relate to that killer, unless it's like self-defense or something. Like to the average person, killing another human being is the last thing in the world that you wanna do.

[01:01:19] **Liz Farrell:** Right.

[01:01:19] **Mandy Matney:** You'll go into debt. You'll deal with the money problems or whatever. But like Liz said, Alex lived his whole life with everything under his control and his family's control. In the two years leading up to the murders of Maggie and Paul, everything was spiraling out of control.





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[01:01:36] **Liz Farrell:** It was a new world for him.

[01:01:37] **Mandy Matney:** And we can't — it's a new world. And if you've lived your entire — and you have to put yourself in his shoes, if you lived your — we've all lived in a world that nothing is in our control, so it's very hard. I'm sure his mind was going crazy. And what do you do? And so, that is the difference with the motive here and, again, I think that shows that this case is just so different from so many other things. Alex Murdaugh was in a much different position from the rest of us and he still is in a different position.

[01:02:11] **Eric Bland:** You see, you guys are making so much sense. It's hard what you say. They're trying to get through 30 witnesses. What you guys condensed in your five minutes, Liz, and in your five minutes, Mandy, they have to spread out on 40 to 80 witnesses. You just condensed it. You made it simple for me to understand.

[01:02:32] **Liz Farrell:** One thing I would say, I would say that Alex told — if Alex did it — Alex told on himself in those first few interviews with SLED. One: he said it was connected to the boat crash. I agree. Two: he said that, he started crying about Maggie and he, you know, he was mourning Maggie I guess in that moment, the very first thing he said about her is she didn't work.

[01:02:54] **Eric Bland:** That's a chauvinistic, misogynistic statement.

[01:02:57] **Liz Farrell:** Kind of. But think of it this way. Either he took immense pride in being able to provide for his family and his wife and, meaning that she got everything she needed. She didn't have to work 'cause he provided it and now, he's maybe in a juncture in his life where he cannot provide it because he's gotten himself into such a hole or two: there was resentment there because she was spending money and faster than he could make it.

[01:03:18] **Mandy Matney:** The Gucci receipt.

[01:03:20] **Liz Farrell:** The Guccis.

[01:03:21] **Mandy Matney:** I was just shocked at how comfortable he was with cops, I mean. And I shouldn't be shocked by that because we —



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[01:03:28] **Eric Bland:** And how comfortable they were with him.

[01:03:29] **Mandy Matney:** Right. And it was it, but it was also, I think that's gonna be something to that makes Dick look not trustworthy is because he made it look like they zeroed him. You know what I mean? And were aggressive. And they treated him like a little baby puppy.

[01:03:44] **Liz Farrell:** Yeah, they did.

[01:03:48] **Eric Bland:** The facts belie what Dick is saying. He was treated with deference with respect as a colleague, not as a suspect. There is just no way — you know why? They would've taken him down and put him under the hot lights where — you see that cold steel table? They would've had the lights on him. Two guys would've been sitting out behind the glass that you can't see through, taking notes. He wasn't put under the hot lights like I would've been put under the hot lights. He was sitting in a car.

[01:04:20] **Mandy Matney:** Right.

[01:04:21] **Eric Bland:** And Jim Griffin saying to the SLED officer, well, you didn't tell me you were recording that. And you, you know, you started asking pointed questions. Well, you know what Jim could have done, guys? There's a doorknob in a car.

[01:04:35] **Mandy Matney:** Right. We're done.

[01:04:37] **Eric Bland:** Open the door and say "We're done."

[01:04:41] **Liz Farrell:** Right.

[01:04:42] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah. And that's just something —

[01:04:43] **Eric Bland:** The cops don't have to tell you they're recording you. Where did that come from?

[01:04:47] **Mandy Matney:** But I truly —



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[01:04:47] **Eric Bland:** He knows he's being interrogated.

[01:04:50] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah, I know. I was like, who cares about permission? Everyone knows that. Just as somebody who watches a lot of true crime, that is one — I have zero experience as a lawyer but I know well enough that if there is a crime and I am anywhere near it and anywhere near a suspect, I am not talking until I have to like —

[01:05:12] **Eric Bland:** Until you get a lawyer.

[01:05:13] **Mandy Matney:** Until I get a lawyer and then he tells me to shut up.

[01:05:16] **Liz Farrell:** That's right.

[01:05:17] **Eric Bland:** Correct.

[01:05:19] **Mandy Matney:** And like that — I've seen way too many false confession true crime shows.

[01:05:24] **Eric Bland:** Yes.

[01:05:24] **Mandy Matney:** To know that like it does happen and people say the wrong things all the time. But I just think that that speaks to their privilege.

[01:05:31] **Eric Bland:** When does somebody actually are successful in talking themselves out of being a suspect? 99 times out of a hundred, you talk yourself into being the suspect when you talk.

[01:05:43] **Mandy Matney:** Well, and I think Jim, too. I think Jim was extremely cocky with just — I think he was so casual about it and he made a decision that the rest of us are like what is wrong with you? Don't you have a law degree? And don't you know like Lawyering 101 like don't let your client talk? That could get you into a lot of trouble. But I think that speaks to how much confidence they had that the cops were working for and with them and not against them. And it's just crazy.



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[01:06:16] **Liz Farrell:** We're publishing — today is Monday for the people who are listening and that means that Mark Tinsley, the lawyer for the Beach case, will be on the stand I think in the morning. So, we're expecting it to be pretty fiery and for Mark to really take this case I think sort of in a new direction or at least be sort of pivotal. And then I think we'll have our 404(b) decision on Monday, so I think that's really all we need to talk about today. I mean, we could talk about this for hours and hours because there's so much. And I've been re-listening to testimony. Mandy's been re-listening. We're just trying to get all the information. So, if we've misstated a fact, let us know because obviously we wanna get it right. And but it's just very difficult when you're reporting on this in real time and it's an all-day affair every day.

[01:07:02] **Mandy Matney:** There's just a lot of information.

[01:07:04] **Eric Bland:** Before I say cups down, I just wanna say it was it's been a real pleasure over this last week and a half of meeting a lot of the MMP and COJ listeners who have come down to the trial to, you know, they see us and they treat us so nice. They want to have their photo taken. They shake our hands and say how much they appreciate us addressing these issues and how much they love the podcasting. But more importantly, Eric Alan and our behind the scenes people, David and all the technology of our trial team that Eric Alan is showing that, you know, we're getting real-time clarity pictures and the ability for you guys to do your narrative all day long in the interaction. It's just a first class operation. We ended our week number one COJ on Apple True Crime. Three little people that, you know, we just had our everyday lives.

[01:08:03] **Liz Farrell:** Yeah.

[01:08:03] **Eric Bland:** And David and three or four or five other people have managed to catch lightning in a bottle. And we could have only done it with the listeners. Without listeners, we're talking to air. So, with that, I'll say cups down from Eric.

[01:08:17] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah. And oh my gosh. I couldn't have imagined a better launch week for Cup of Justice. And that just speaks to our listeners and how awesome and supportive that they are and they really helped us get here and I can't thank them enough for that. It's crazy just to see like our two podcasts now are beating like *The New York Times* and not like *NPR*.



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[01:08:42] **Eric Bland:** Dateline.

[01:08:43] **Liz Farrell:** I know.

[01:08:44] **Mandy Matney:** Every major media company in the country is covering this case and I can't — so, I think everybody should pat themselves on the back and we just wanna thank you for listening to us and supporting us because I'm just speechless at how crazy that is.

[01:08:59] **Liz Farrell:** That said, don't forget to rate and review us. We love —

[01:09:03] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah, five star reviews.

[01:09:05] **Liz Farrell:** Five stars. If you're giving out stars, we love five of them. Give what you want, but we would like the five. But also, thank you so much for supporting our mission. We love that you guys understand what we're doing.

[01:09:16] **Mandy Matney:** Cups down I think.

[01:09:18] **Liz Farrell:** Cups down.

[01:09:19] **Eric Bland:** Cups down, guys.

[01:09:20] **Liz Farrell:** Cups down.

[01:09:45] **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.