



EPISODE 3: Motives and Motivations - What's Up Next For Alex Murdaugh?

[00:00:00] **Mandy Matney:** Hello out there to our MMP superfans. I would normally say "Happy Friday," but it's really not a great Friday for a lot of people on the East Coast. We're currently hunkering down in the low country and we're safe, hoping Hurricane Ian will be decent to us. And our hearts are with those who are in Florida suffering from the storm.

[00:00:25] As we reported in MMP this week, the judge in the Mallory Beach boat crash case reversed his earlier order that basically split the case in two and allowed the Murdaughs to indefinitely postpone that trial so that Alex could prepare for his speedy murder trial. With that decision reversal though, the judge also announced that the Beach case is now on the docket for January 9th, 2023. So we don't know what that means yet for Alex's murder trial. As far as we're hearing, Dick and Jim are still insisting it will happen that same month. On Thursday, we reached out to South Carolina Attorney General's Office, and they told us that the murder case still has not been scheduled. In the meantime, I wanted to share with you all some conversations I recently had with Liz Farrell and Eric Bland about Alex and his murder trial. And we also talked about something else that's on Eric's mind.

[00:01:32] **Eric Bland:** So Mandy, in all of your interviews that you've done, you know, on the record or off the record, talking to your sources, you obviously learned a lot of the inside facts about the Murdaugh family. I mean, what have you learned that somebody could say good about Alex or something that could be good about the family in general? Because when you read everything, there's nothing. Nobody's coming forward and saying that they're charitable, you know? They're benevolent. They give their time to the church. Nothing. It's just nothing. It's all about that they're arrogant, money-entitled people who locked the system up for years.

[00:02:11] **Mandy Matney:** I think something that we've heard for years is that they were nice to certain people in certain circumstances. And they were nice to everyone's faces, for the most part, like the Satterfields.

[00:02:24] **Eric Bland:** Then they stab you in the back, right?



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[00:02:25] **Mandy Matney:** Like the Satterfields. I think Alex was really good at being a warm presence around certain people.

[00:02:34] **Liz Farrell:** He had a lot of energy.

[00:02:35] **Mandy Matney:** He had a lot of energy. People said he was really like life of the party sometimes. And I think he was able to kind of play a father figure role to people like the Satterfields and was able to look them in the eye and say, "I got you, boy." And but that's a part of what a sociopath-slash-narcissist is like they have two sides. And 'cause nobody, Alex would not have been able to do the things that he got away with doing if he wasn't able to convince some people that he was decent. And he had all the power.

[00:03:12] **Liz Farrell:** I was gonna say. I think a lot of it, too, like we can't forget that he was an employee of the 14th, he was a volunteer at the 14th Circuit Solicitor's Office. So he had some considerable power when it came to helping people when they got into trouble. So that's certainly, you know, when you're talking about being charitable, I don't know that that's it. I don't think it is because, you know, I'm sure he didn't do that stuff for free. I mean, maybe he did, I don't know. But I have no knowledge of what he did. But I'm saying, you know, that kind of power with the legal system, with the justice system is, what they could trade on, right? So you get into a car accident or you were drunk driving or something like that, then Alex's gonna help you out. And I think, this is a point that I think needs to be made, when plaintiffs' attorneys tell potential clients that I'm gonna handle this pro bono and that I've heard this from a couple people in Hampton County about how Alex would handle their cases, quote unquote, pro bono. That's not pro bono, right, Eric? What is that?

[00:04:10] **Eric Bland:** Pro bono is, you know, you give your time to people that are poor, that need advice, whether it's military spouses, a military person's gone away getting called to duty. How do you deal with, you know, getting abatement of mortgage and things like that, dealing with indigent people, representing people that are in, you know —

[00:04:32] **Liz Farrell:** He wouldn't take a fee for it.



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[00:04:34] **Eric Bland:** He won't take a fee for it.

[00:04:35] **Liz Farrell:** But he was taking fees for his —

[00:04:36] **Eric Bland:** Right, his pro bono. That's not pro bono.

[00:04:39] **Liz Farrell:** When you tell, so I think that there's a misconception, so it's funny because Hampton County is such a legal community, right? That's where, that's its industry, chief industry. So you have people that are, you know, maybe just not, there's like the legal literacy, not understanding that these lawyers actually are taking your case on a contingency basis, which means that there's a fee agreement, supposed to be, and as part of that, they're gonna take a certain percentage of your case, anywhere between 25 and 40 perhaps. And I would venture to guess with Alex it was probably almost always 40%, right? Plus the tip he gave himself apparently after. Yeah, the bonus he gave himself.

[00:05:22] **Eric Bland:** Yeah, he's on the bonus plan. Now, you just used a great term that we're gonna use throughout our podcast as we go forward. "Legal literacy." That's what we're gonna do for our listeners. We're gonna give them legal literacy so nobody ever can spin or throw something around their heads.

[00:05:38] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah. And speaking of spinning, they're, so what you asked is in all of the reporting, has anybody said on the record that they're good people? And from what I've seen, the only thing pretty much, I mean, the only politician, which is interesting 'cause we know how embedded the Murdaughs were with South Carolina politics, we know that they were movers and shakers, especially within the Democratic party. But Bakari Sellers was the only one, and I watched Twitter very closely after the murders because I was wondering what was going on, and my phone was blowing up with people that I've known throughout South Carolina who knew the Murdaugh family in different capacities, whether that was through the trial lawyers, whether that was from USC Law. And what a majority of people were saying is I know that guy, I don't really like him, he's a jerk, but I don't know if he killed his family.

[00:06:41] **Eric Bland:** I get a lot of that on the golf course. A lot of people that I've golfed with were his fraternity brothers or played football with him and



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they said, you know, he was a fun guy, but you know, you didn't turn your back. You watched him with both eyes, you know? One guy described him he's a guy that could, Alex reminded me of a guy that could look through a keyhole with both eyes at the same time.

[00:07:06] **Liz Farrell:** What does that mean?

[00:07:07] **Eric Bland:** Real, you know, a guy that's really, you can't trust, it's a schemer, you know? A guy that's looking like that, you know, a real schemer. You know, one thing I wanted to add that you just talked about is they hired Nexsen Pruet's marketing company. What are they doing? What is it that they're actually doing? I mean, can't they muster up one family that Alex represented who would come forward and say he was the most amazing attorney. I just want to tell you that he was calling us, he kept us informed, he was there for us in the hospital, he recovered money for us, he gave money to our charity, he went to my kid's wedding, he's the godfather of — Couldn't, what are they doing? You can't, of all his representation, I mean, I can go to a lot of clients that if I needed them and my back was up against the wall, they do testimonials. I have, he can't come up with anything like that, Mandy?

[00:08:08] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah. And the other thing is the, I mean, I just wanna make this very clear. The writing was on the wall about Alex Murdaugh not being a great person way before the double homicide of 2021. And before the boat crash, like when the boat crash happened. But I think that's a misconception because people say to me, Mandy, well, because of your reporting, we now know all these things about Alex. And it's like, ask eight people in Hampton County about Alex Murdaugh before 2021 and I guarantee you they wouldn't have said he's a kind, gentle soul and his family's from the salt of the earth.

[00:08:44] **Liz Farrell:** So when you look at the Murdaughs as an institution kind of the same way you would maybe the Catholic Church or something like that, you have a culture of silence. You have a culture of, you can all say, yeah, we thought father so-and-so is rather creepy, but who's gonna be the first one to say it? And what cover do they have in saying it? Obviously, the more people —

[00:09:04] **Eric Bland:** And what are the repercussions if you do say it.



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[00:09:05] **Liz Farrell:** What are the repercussions? So if you look at a closed circuit like Hampton County. So you're talking about we live in the 14th Circuit, there's five counties, right? Well, Hampton County is, so that's already insular. The 14th Circuit already has its border and we do things a lot differently and uniquely, which is a nice way of saying like really messed up and what have you. But Hampton County's an even smaller, you know, country within that country. So it is like the Vatican maybe to a certain extent. So it's like a closed circuit. To come forward as one person is suicide basically, right? What are you gonna do? Law enforcement's not gonna listen to me. Who do you go to, first of all, who are you reporting them to? The air? Because where do you go to report a Murdaugh? There's no one to tell.

[00:09:53] **Eric Bland:** Where was this all gonna go? So without Mallory Beach, how long would he have kept this up? If there's somebody that would've told on him or he got caught, would he have been able to buy his way out? Would this have just continued on? Look, Russ wasn't gonna do it anymore.

[00:10:10] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah, the answer is yes. And we'll be right back.

[00:10:24] **Liz Farrell:** So Mandy, do you wanna talk about the, this has sort of bothered you from the beginning, why are they going with the murder trial first? Why not trial the financial crimes first when it comes to Alex Murdaugh? Do you wanna sort of introduce people to that and what the issue is?

[00:10:40] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah. And I mean, the big thing I think to get across is that we don't know if it's all up to Newman, correct?

[00:10:48] **Liz Farrell:** Judge Newman.

[00:10:49] **Eric Bland:** Yeah. It's also, now it's also up to Creighton. He controls the docket.

[00:10:53] **Liz Farrell:** The prosecution.

[00:10:54] **Mandy Matney:** Does the judge have to agree?



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[00:10:55] **Liz Farrell:** Dick Harpootlian sent a letter to the Supreme Court, to Chief Justice Beatty right around the time that he sent, like maybe the day before the motion, like it was in conjunction with that motion to compel. So he's asking the chief justice to put the murder trial on the docket. Why is that? Why is he asking the chief justice to do that?

[00:11:16] **Eric Bland:** Dick is asking for things that normal lawyers don't get to ask for.

[00:11:20] **Liz Farrell:** And I apologize. It wasn't to the chief justice. It was to, I believe there's somebody in that office that handles the docket scheduling to that person. Okay. Why?

[00:11:29] **Eric Bland:** Because he wants to force the hand to get Alex's murder case tried first for some reason. Again, he's got a strategy that no one really understands. I don't know whether Dick is just winging it, but he's got Jim Griffin, who is a really bright lawyer. I can't wait to hear what their strategy is.

[00:11:49] **Liz Farrell:** Well, what do you think? So what do you think the strategy is? Why is he pushing so hard for this to get on the docket?

[00:11:55] **Eric Bland:** Because he can win. He can win. Dick Harpootlian can win this case. Again, it's a circumstantial evidence case. He only has to flip one juror. This is being tried in Alex's backyard. The Murdaugh tentacles, the Murdaugh reach goes long and long and long. And he only has to flip one juror. And it's starting to sound like according, you know, Dick's gonna say they're overloading Alex with charges, 900 years on the financial, Dick can't win the financial crimes. I'm telling you, there isn't any way that I could close my eyes and see how a jury of 12 could let him steal the Satterfields' money.

[00:12:38] **Liz Farrell:** So can Dick defend the financial crimes so given that he's admitted on the record that his client is a —

[00:12:44] **Eric Bland:** Drug addiction is not a defense to stealing money. It's a mitigation when you're being sentenced after convicted. Somebody gets to say look, I had a, you know, a developmental disorder when I was a child. My dad beat me, whatever. You say anything. I was a drug addict. I wasn't, whatever. But it's not a defense to mens rea, the criminal intent. So he stole



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money. That's it. End of story. Sometimes, as a lawyer, you can't win. Facts are facts. And so, I don't understand the theory behind Creighton not coming right out and saying we're back to back to backing these financial crimes. You chose to charge them first. You chose to bring financial crimes before the grand jury, before a murder charge. Why did you do that? That's what comes back to me asking why haven't we heard from Alan Wilson? When is Alan Wilson going to get in front of the camera and say this is why we've done what we've done. We wanted to get all the financial crimes charged first, then we wanted to bring the murder charge. This is why we're gonna try "X" first. We elected him as the Attorney General of South Carolina. Whether you voted for him or not, he is our attorney general. He works for us. He needs to tell us why they're spending our dollars in a certain way.

[00:14:05] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah, absolutely. And it's been very disappointing that we haven't seen —

[00:14:09] **Eric Bland:** Seen or heard from him.

[00:14:10] **Mandy Matney:** We just need leadership, I mean.

[00:14:12] **Liz Farrell:** So is one reason that the financial crimes that they started getting charged first could just be the practical matter of Mandy and you made it difficult for them not to. So it, you know, basically, I mean you called them out, Mandy, saying like, where are the charges in the Satterfield case because, and this was like in September?

[00:14:32] **Eric Bland:** No, I did in the state paper. She did on her podcast. I did in the state paper and I said where is SLED? It's a disgrace. And then I got a phone call from Chief Keel who said can you stop beating me up in the newspaper? And I said, well, do your job. Bring the charges. They're right there. It's the easiest thing in the world.

[00:14:51] **Liz Farrell:** So it's also a way to keep Alex in not just jail but under some sort of bonds situation where he's being tracked.

[00:14:59] **Eric Bland:** No, that's a good point too.



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[00:15:00] **Liz Farrell:** So while you're sealing up the murder charges, you now have an excuse to, you know, put a tracker on him, whatever that, you know, they thought that might look like. So that could be one reason. But so they filed those, I guess what I'm saying is I'm accounting for why would they have filed those charges first? Well, you guys haven't made it impossible not to.

[00:15:18] **Eric Bland:** Well, why did they bring the first charge — no, the first charge was the Labor Day shooting. So what did they do with that?

[00:15:25] **Liz Farrell:** He didn't stay in jail. I mean, he got —

[00:15:27] **Mandy Matney:** And also the —

[00:15:28] **Eric Bland:** What are they doing with that though, Mandy?

[00:15:30] **Mandy Matney:** Sitting on it because they have to —

[00:15:31] **Eric Bland:** It's not insurance fraud.

[00:15:33] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah, it's not insurance fraud. So they're gonna have to come to the —

[00:15:36] **Eric Bland:** They may have to drop that.

[00:15:38] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah. I mean, yeah, because, I mean, if you look back at the warrants, so much of it is based off of Alex's word and that's it. And that's not worth anything.

[00:15:45] **Eric Bland:** And the other thing is insurance fraud's, insurance fraud is actually filing a document and signing it and submitting it to an insurance company to try to get money. He never did that. That was an intent to do it. It's called an inchoate crime. I-N-C-H-O-A-T-E. Incomplete. It was started but never completed.

[00:16:07] **Mandy Matney:** It's like a thoughtcrime, I mean.

[00:16:09] **Eric Bland:** Thoughtcrime. Perfect.



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[00:16:10] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah. And you can't be arresting people for what they intended to do and then didn't. That doesn't make any sense.

[00:16:17] **Liz Farrell:** There's a lot of discussion on that.

[00:16:18] **Mandy Matney:** But it seems like with that entire thing, it seems like Dick and Jim sat down with SLED and are like —

[00:16:23] **Eric Bland:** You can't say, I want to, I wish I, you know, I really want to kill the president of the United States. That's a thought crime that could get you done but in normal circumstances.

[00:16:31] **Liz Farrell:** Mandy, why don't you talk a little bit about why you think, like why does that bother you, I guess I'm jumping to a conclusion here, but if it bothers you why that the murders are come, you know, being tried first, like why would you like to see the financial crimes come first?

[00:16:47] **Mandy Matney:** Well, Eric has talked a lot about momentum and how big momentum is for attorneys. And the more that I've thought about it, the riskier it is to go, and the bottom line with the murder charges is we don't know their cards. We don't know the prosecution and how we've been told that there's a lot of evidence. We've been, but until we know more, it's gonna be hard to determine how risky the case is.

[00:17:18] **Eric Bland:** Dick is a master at derailment and the murder case it put up. There's so many different times during a murder trial it could get derailed. Something could happen. There's less that can happen in these financial crime cases because they're more direct. It's not based on what was his intent or whatever. Here's the checks.

[00:17:41] **Liz Farrell:** So I think the thing that we need to clarify here, so when we're talking about them trying the murder case first versus the financial crimes first, are we saying that we think one will be erased? Are we saying that if you try the murder charges first, then there's no chance of getting convictions in the financial crimes if he's found not guilty? Like is there, does one depend on the other?



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[00:18:04] **Eric Bland:** No. It's the OJ case. He's going to, listen. He's going away for the rest of his life. He's either going away for murder, he's either going away for financial crimes.

[00:18:17] **Liz Farrell:** So if he's found guilty of murder, is there a chance do you think that Creighton or the state, you know, whoever the prosecutor is, will not try the financial cases?

[00:18:26] **Eric Bland:** No, they'll try one of them.

[00:18:28] **Liz Farrell:** Okay, and why is that?

[00:18:29] **Eric Bland:** Just to load them up because the murder case could get reversed on appeal. You're never going to put all your eggs in one conviction. Strange things happen on appeal. Judge lets too much in, he excludes evidence that can get reversed on appeal and it has to be retried. You belt and suspender this case, you duct tape it, you cement it every which way you can because appellate courts reverse trials all the time. If it's a death penalty, they get reversed all the time. So no, I have an absolute belief that they are going to go through all current charges. And once they get done with those, if it fails on the state level, they'll load them up on the federal level. But they don't wanna do the federal level because Dick will march them down the next day and say we plead guilty to that. Go throw the book at us and let me go in a federal prison.

[00:19:26] **Mandy Matney:** But the other thing that I think we have to mention is that what we've seen so far from the defense is a big part it seems like of their strategy is that the state is after me and the government is after me. And there's this big conspiracy and —

[00:19:40] **Eric Bland:** Here's what surprises me.

[00:19:41] **Liz Farrell:** So wait, just to stop, 'cause what you're saying is that the state is based, so Dick and Jim can benefit off of holding off on the financial crimes because then they can always say like look at this stack of charges, that it's part of the defense and the murder case is what you're saying.



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[00:19:56] **Mandy Matney:** And I think it would be a lot better off going into the murder case if he was tried and convicted by a jury in "X," "Y," and all these other charges versus those charges haven't been, haven't gone to trial yet, and they're just out there so it looks like he's just accused of everything. And then God forbid something happens in the murder trial and then you lose momentum.

[00:20:23] **Liz Farrell:** So it benefits Dick and Jim more to do it the way they wanna do it, which is to have the murder charges first because then they can just point to that stack of charges.

[00:20:31] **Eric Bland:** No, Dick doesn't wanna lose. Dick is not a loser. And he is in this to the end. He can't bow out.

[00:20:38] **Mandy Matney:** Why? Why do you think that he's so stuck in this?

[00:20:43] **Eric Bland:** Because he's been on national TV. There's no way he can walk away and say I'm gonna be a witness or I'm in conflict. He'll look like he's hightailed running it and taking his toys and running home after he shot his mouth off. He's not doing that.

[00:20:57] **Liz Farrell:** But yeah, I mean, like you're saying that for Dick Harpootlian, the spotlight is way too tempting for him.

[00:21:03] **Eric Bland:** He can't get out now, even if he wanted to. And a lot of people have told him you had a chance to bail, you should, whatever. But he's all in and if he walked now look like a coward running home.

[00:21:15] **Liz Farrell:** So if we know though that he's, so Alex Murdaugh it's sort of a foregone conclusion I guess that he will be facing some time in the state penitentiary. So does it matter then what is charged first? Like what is the, so let's just say like —

[00:21:29] **Eric Bland:** Yeah, it does. OJ.

[00:21:30] **Liz Farrell:** What's the goal here? Is it just because, I think we should probably talk about the aspect that is the victims, because that's I think



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where we're coming from, right? Which is the victims and the financial crimes. Why are they less important than the unidentified, I hate to say that about the murder case, but the unidentified victims, because we really haven't heard an outcry from the people that we would assume normally are the victims in the murder.

[00:21:55] **Eric Bland:** You don't hear the Murdaugh family screaming we want this trial to go forward. They're victims. Randolph is the PR for Paul. John Marvin is the PR for Maggie. They should be screaming at the top of their lungs "try this case." Because they're not screaming, maybe they think that Alex is not the right defendant. And we'll be right back.

[00:22:35] Now, there's gonna be tons of motions in limine. So Dick will make motions in limine, motions to limit, motions to exclude it means, to not let the state talk about all these other crimes that he's done. Dick's going to say limit this only to a murder, not, you know. But then I think the Mallory Beach trial comes in because that's, even though they don't have to show motive, they can say, aren't you sued with Paul in the Mallory Beach case? And aren't you pissed that you got sued in the Mallory Beach case and that you were mad at Paul for that?

[00:23:11] **Liz Farrell:** Go back to what you just said. They don't have to show motive.

[00:23:14] **Eric Bland:** They don't. It's not an element to show in murder. They just have to show that you had one second of premeditation of thought that you wanted to kill somebody.

[00:23:23] **Liz Farrell:** So why then, when they were talking about the potential for a gag order was one of the things that, I believe it was the prosecution, what they brought up was that because the motive is tied to all the financial, you know, the other cases that are pending, that's why they were, you know, arguing for the gag order.

[00:23:41] **Eric Bland:** They don't have to prove motive, but they are gonna talk about motive. They're not gonna just, that's not gonna be the 800-pound elephant in the room. They're gonna talk about motive. They're gonna talk about, yeah, all these different things. The financial pressure. Maggie, you



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know, had enough, whether she saw a divorce lawyer, whether Maggie said, look, you know, I want my money separated from yours. We don't know anything about their relationship. What if Maggie said I no longer want to have a joint account with you. I want my money separate. They know a lot more than we know.

[00:24:18] **Liz Farrell:** So going back to the victim's part of this, Mandy with, you know, the financial crimes, do you think that that's maybe like the driving factor of why you think the financial crimes should be tried first, not just strategy?

[00:24:33] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah, that's a big part of it besides the risk involved. But like, I mean, Eric, you work closer than the victims in this case than I do. I'm sure they're all ready to just get this past them.

[00:24:46] **Eric Bland:** They want justice.

[00:24:46] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah, they want justice.

[00:24:48] **Eric Bland:** When we start ranking who's the bigger victim, who's the worse victim, then that's not fair because the Satterfields, they lost their mother and their sister. The Plylers lost their mother and their brother. And as a result of those deaths, they've been exploited. So they feel like their death is worse than Maggie and Paul's. Maggie and Paul have lived this incredibly privileged rich life, and it's tragic that they were killed. And if they were killed for a reason and a purpose, somebody needs to find out. But these other clients, you thought enough to bring them before a grand jury. Now, are you just saying, well, they're, you're not really important. Nobody's communicating with them. I would love somebody to call the Satterfields on the phone from the AG's office or call the Plylers and say, listen, here's why. If they do decide to try the murder case first, somebody better be calling these victims and tell them why is your case put off till 2025.

[00:26:03] **Mandy Matney:** The Murdaugh Murders Podcast is created by me, Mandy Matney, and my fiancé, David Moses. Our executive editor is Liz Farrell.

[00:26:11] **Outro:** Produced by Luna Shark Productions.



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