



EPISODE 45: Buster Murdaugh And The Latest Propaganda to Save A Family's Reputation

[00:00:08] **Liz Farrell:** Cups up guys.

[00:00:09] **Mandy Matney:** Cups up.

[00:00:09] **Eric Bland:** Cups up. Happy Thursday.

[00:00:11] **Liz Farrell:** Yeah. Happy Thursday, I suppose. How are you guys doing? Mandy, you're coming at us from the farthest distance.

[00:00:17] **Mandy Matney:** Espana, yeah. Well, we're only gonna be in Spain for two days, so won't be long gone. Yeah, we're in Europe. We were in Portugal for the last couple days. It was beautiful, we're having really great weather, it's been awesome. Just still getting used to the time change and everything. So I'm a little rusty today.

[00:00:36] **Eric Bland:** Love that you're so dedicated on your vacation you're podding up at nine o'clock at night. Thank you so much.

[00:00:42] **Mandy Matney:** Well, there's a lot to talk about today. And I was very excited to talk about these things because I have a lot to say. So we should get into it.

[00:00:52] **Liz Farrell:** So yeah, we have Buster's so-called tell-all interview with Fox Nation, which came out early today. All three episodes are out for, I believe, subscribers of that channel, and you guys have had a chance to watch?

[00:01:05] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah, yeah.

[00:01:07] **Liz Farrell:** Yeah, we're gonna have a lot to talk about. So why don't we start by doing this? Let's start with you, Mandy, and just why don't you start by telling us some of your main impressions so far in what you're seeing?

[00:01:19] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah, so there's a lot here. Starting with, and I was really thinking about this right before we logged on, if this whole thing was because Buster wants to make his reputation better—his reputation has been damaged by all of this and this is his chance to tell his story—I feel like this is worse for his reputation. Because I've scanned a lot of internet comments, and people just aren't accepting of what he's saying, and they're having a hard time relating to him. I think before Buster was like this mysterious character that you could have a lot more sympathy for.



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And granted, you could always have sympathy for somebody whose mother and brother died, but he just, he was cold, he was dissociated, he was hard to, he was saying a lot of phrases that I didn't think were very natural to him and seemed very rehearsed, and the whole thing just kind of made my stomach sick. What about you, Liz?

[00:02:21] **Liz Farrell:** Well, I'll start with this. The number one thing that I felt after watching these episodes was that everything that we've said about the Murdaughs could not be more true than in this moment right now. Because let's go before the murders, and just what a bear this family was to dance with in Hampton County and the Lowcountry, and they will tire you out. Isn't that the saying, Eric, like don't get don't dance with a bear because they'll tire you out? These people will tire you out. And you can see he's been convicted, he has 100 more, 120-something more charges to go, and they're coming out with this piece of nonsense that is meant...

[00:03:05] **Eric Bland:** Propaganda.

[00:03:06] **Liz Farrell:** Propaganda. Thank you. That's meant to, I would assume, give Dick and Jim a source of revenue, give Buster a source of revenue. Now I know why he was quick to settle with the Beach family, because he closed the door on that bank account, and now he has whatever money I would assume you earn from this. And then to repair this reputation, I think Becky Hill, the clerk record in Colleton county said, this family's name is never going to be the same. And that Hanson county man with a long beard—not really sure what his role in all this is except as a guy up there—he said that the family's name was not broken, that it's not harmed by this. So I don't know, it's, this is what we were up against guys, like before the murders. Like, this is why the boat crash was going to be so hard to prosecute. This is why everything that the Murdaugh's got into they can get out of. You can see that they will not give up. They just won't. So this is proof positive of it, and I, as much as I will loathe sending people to watch this, do think that it's a lesson. Like I've never been more certain of his guilt, and I've never had more questions about Stephen Smith's death than I do now. And poor Gloria, and that one picture, but we'll talk about that. Eric, what are your thoughts?

[00:04:22] **Eric Bland:** I have many. We have personally avoided criticizing Buster for the better part of the last year because we wanted to respect the fact that he did lose a mother and a brother, and essentially lost a father. And he really didn't put



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himself out there by making any public statements that you could dissect them and criticize them. But by him choosing to go on Fox News, as opposed to a more mainstream type of journalism, and the fact that he did this on his own time with their own dime in a way, he is subject to being dissected, he is subjected to being criticize, and he is subject to being ridiculed just like everybody else would once they get behind the microphone. I think he didn't do himself any service. I think he did himself a disservice. I think his whole demeanor screamed of entitlement. He blamed the jury, he blamed the media, he blamed journalists, he blamed people like us who are podcasters—now you guys are both, you have the blended title—but blamed everybody except his own family's behavior. He admitted that his father was a psychopath. He admitted that he was a manipulator, a liar, and a cheat, but under no circumstances could he ever see that his father was a murderer. He still ponders why his father lied so much, so frequently, about the kennel, and yet he doesn't think that his father had anything to do with it and that the killer wants to kill him. I just don't understand why he wants to elevate himself to the level of well, my life's in danger too, but I've taken the necessary precautions. The way he dressed with Chohan or Ferragamo loafers and no socks is just not the image that you want to portray to everyday America. And it reminded me of some of the people that are regular appearances on Fox News. They're speaking to a very small sliver-limited audience, the people that want to hear them. But the goal would be to persuade those that don't necessarily agree with you, and you have to be put in a position where you ask questions. So he said to him, you know, like you said yesterday, he doesn't believe he's a liar, a manipulator, a cheater, he doesn't have those characteristics anymore, and passed down to him by his father, yet they never asked him about, well, tell us about what happened in law school. That's fair game. That's something that should be spoken about. He is obviously in his father's camp, and I don't blame him for that. You know, a son, if the son wants to be loyal to a father, fine. But don't go on TV and say some outrageous things and then pull back and say, "My father isn't a murderer. He didn't do it. Our lives are in danger." It just, it rang hollow for me, and I think he did himself more of a disservice. I get it that he couldn't go on there and say, "I believe my father's a killer," because his father's got a case on appeal. And if the appellate court heard that his very own son believed that he was guilty of murder, you know, what effect would that have had on the judges? Dick and Jim want to portray somebody other than themselves who are saying that Alex is innocent, because they have a case that they want to be reversed on appeal. They want to continue to make money, they want to repair their reputations. Although, Jim was sullied this week with what happened with the Department of Corrections.



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So for me, I have stayed away from criticizing and analyzing Buster, but not now. No, he chose to be paid for this, and he chose to get in front of the microphone. So anybody who wants to get mad at me, like some of the people did when I started commenting about it on yesterday, hey, it's all fair game.

[00:08:16] **Liz Farrell:** Those are good points. Mandy, David made a good point to us earlier today, when he asked, "What was the point of this documentary?" What do you think the point of all this was? Like what is the the mission or the underlying like takeaway, I guess, that they were hoping that people would have?

[00:08:32] **Mandy Matney:** I think you said it the best. I think the whole point of it was to rewrite history in their way. And I mean, you could tell down to the people that they selected, not all the people they selected. They had Creighton, they had, it wasn't entirely one sided, but it was very strategic as to who they had speaking about what happened. And it was kind of like a white washing of the history of Alex Murdaugh and everything that happened. Like they made it out to be this thing where everybody was against this family and Alex just was a victim victimized by the system that his family created. And that is just so ridiculous and absurd, and they were acting like, the things that they said about the boat crash really made me angry. That was another rewrite of history that, again, with documentaries, you expect them to have some level of ethics to be able to, you know, fact check. When Dick Harpootlian said that there was evidence that Paul was at the front of the boat with his ex-girlfriend Morgan, like that is unequivocally not true. And we know that the kids would not have said that if the boat crash went to trial. We know that Morgan would have not said that if the boat crash went to trial. How dare Dick Harpootlian say that, and then how dare Fox News for just going on like, "Oh, yeah. The media just put all this pressure on the family and it went back to that, and then Paul I was victimized, and then after that Alex was victimized," and it's just complete crap.

[00:10:04] **Liz Farrell:** Yeah. So Eric, I have a question for you. You mentioned that Buster obviously isn't gonna go on the record and say I think my father did this right before the appeal. This show was not supposed to air today, right? This was supposed to be, I guess, sometime in September, and granted like September's tomorrow, but do you think that this was, why did they put this out now? Like, is there some sort of strategy? Like what are they trying to get ahead of? Because one of the reporters that was interviewed throughout this is named Dana Kennedy. She is with the New



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York Post and I have a lot to say about her, but right now all they want to say is this. She made this sort of ominous comment, like this little, "Oh, I bet this isn't going to be the last twist that we see in the Murdaugh case," as if she's got some like insider invoice inside her head, which probably sounds a lot like Jim or a lot like Dick telling her that something big's coming out. And we've been hearing a lot behind the scenes about what Dick is planning for the appeal regarding the jurors and some stuff that's involved with the jury. So, do you think there was any benefit for Dick or Jim in their appeal by having this air now?

[00:11:04] **Eric Bland:** I don't. You know, you have more inside fastball information than I do, because you have much more contacts than I do. But it does make sense that he would lambaste the jury if the gravamen of their appeal is going to be a corrupt or a tainted jury pool or an actual tainted jury. Buster made the statement that the jury came in with a preconceived notion that they were going to vote guilty. That they didn't hear anything, that it was not a jury of our peers. It was a jury of his peers, it just wasn't a jury of the Forest Lake Country Club peers that they hoped that they were going to get, and nobody has a right to get that. You have a jury of your peers of those they've representing in your county or where the crime took place. So it makes sense to me that they're going to attack the jury on the appeal as an issue in addition to the 404B character evidence that we've talked about for months on end. So it sounds like there's going to be a couple issues. You know, it really is bad that Dick and Jim let him go on and attack the jury. I get it. It's about attacking the media and attacking the mom-mentality that everybody was, you know, always saying bad things about his father and his family, but they certainly had a PR firm. You know, Dick Harpootlian had a PR firm, Nexsen Pruet, and I assume they were paid a lot of money. And they could have gotten some other contrary stories out there that he's a decent guy, or they could have gotten some clients that he did a good job for. And again, I've said this over and over again, I never heard one good story or good piece of a vignette of anything that Alex did, or that their family did. Sure, nice people came up on the witness stand, but again, they're hunting buddies or they're country club buddies. It wasn't the normal, everyday hardworking American that wants to stand up for Alex Murdaugh. And, you know, they attacked the jury, hard. And that is not going to go over well with Judge Newman, who still has issues that are going to come before him on Murdaugh. It's not going to go over, I would hope, with Judge Gergel as this progresses if he does plead guilty on September 21st. It was in bad taste to really hammer a jury.



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[00:13:27] **Mandy Matney:** I agree. And the more I'm thinking about it I'm like, Buster was straight up insulting to the jury pool, and Collington. He said something like, "It was a very, it was a small town and a very small county." Well, Buster's from a small town and a small county, like come on, man. And like, I just think he's upset because it's the first time in this family's history that the common people could do something about their family. And they don't like it when the rules are when the tables are turned and the rules are reversed, and they actually have to play by the rules. Again, what he was saying is not going to go over well for his reputation. And that, like you said too, Eric, all of this is a huge disservice to his reputation. And he wants to talk about how everybody else ruined his reputation, him standing up for his father and saying these things insulting the jury, and he insulted Judge Newman a few times, it just didn't land.

[00:14:28] **Liz Farrell:** Can we talk about, one thing that was bothering me throughout this whole thing was like we talked throughout the trial about the totality of evidence and how important that was. That it wasn't just this one piece of evidence that was going to say that Alec Murdaugh did this. And again, we're faced, like I thought we had packed this up and we were done with it, but here we are again, with these people. And I say these people I don't mean the Murdaughs. I mean the Murdaughs plus Dick and Jim, plus the people who are commenting on this, like the reporters and such in this, and I don't, I guess I shouldn't even use reporters. There's just a few, but anyway. I feel like they kept harping on the same thing like, "Oh my god. It was a raincoat, not a tarp that Michelle was talking about," and, "Oh my god, they didn't search Almeida," and, "Oh my god," you know? It's just all these little things that were like, yeah, but also his movement, like if you start taking every little thing that's weird about this, how do these people not see what we see? That's the thing that's crazy to me. So you're telling me the coincidence of the two guns that are missing for your family are the ones that are used, because that was the whole thing that we don't know. Remember that question they asked you—do you guys remember this—they asked all the people that they're interviewing in this like, "Well, do you think he was killed with the family's weapons?" And that one guy was like, "Well, I don't know. Because how can anyone know? That's an unanswerable question." Well, it's not. Like let's look, let's look at that. Let's add to the weird thing that this tarp-raincoat thing has gunshot residue on the inside. Let's talk about his movements. Let's talk about the big lie with the video. So it's just like, all this show did for me was reiterate how guilty he actually is. Like it put, it actually packaged it in a nicer way for me, honestly. So I don't know if you guys had any



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revelations when you were looking at that, but it was just really frustrating for me to see we're having this conversation again.

[00:16:13] **Eric Bland:** What word did he use when they talked about motive? It was an adjective. It was a one word thing. What did he say?

[00:16:20] **Mandy Matney:** Malarkey. Was it malarkey? Malarkey. Yeah, it was.

[00:16:23] **Eric Bland:** Okay, so it wasn't the motive of the financial crimes that he said was malarkey, he said it was about the scientific technological evidence about the phone mapping and everything. That was the strongest evidence in the trial. The motive of the financial crimes was, even by our own admission, somewhat tenuous. It didn't have a strong rope binding it. It was more of a thread that, you know, that could be pulled and stretched. But the technological evidence was so overwhelming. Technological evidence of the videos, of the phone mapping, of the phone movement, and he said that was malarkey. That to me was offensive.

[00:17:07] **Liz Farrell:** So in addition to Dick Harpootlian saying that was malarkey, he then, when he was talking about the roadside shooting, just outright said it was motivated by his financial crimes. So it goes back to what Creighton said, like this is what he does in desperate times. So if Dick is sitting there like accidentally admitting that, "Yeah, Alex resorted to this crazy plot when faced with his financial crimes. He was willing to end everything," well, that's what we're talking about, isn't it? The thing that you just called malarkey. Now you're saying that that motive applies here but not there. Well, it shows you how desperate he is. This whole series shows you how bad they are at coming up with solutions to their problems.

[00:17:46] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah, and I was just thinking, there was something else. Dick was just hammering home the same like four things that he was whining about throughout the whole trial like, no booties on the crime scene, and tire marks, and like blah blah blah, and it was sloppy. And it's like, man, that happened, that trial was a while ago. How have you not come up with some better points to like actually land between? Because those didn't work the first time. Nobody bought 'em.

[00:18:17] **Eric Bland:** Yeah, no, no murder weapon. They kept on saying no murder weapon, no bloody clothes. Well, there's no bloody clothes because he got rid of



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them. I mean, we know he changed his clothes. I mean, how insulting to an audience does it have to be?

[00:18:31] **Mandy Matney:** Right. And they, a couple of the people on there were talking about how complicated the evidence was, and how it would have been impossible for a jury to go through all that evidence, and how like they entered all the guns and that didn't make any sense and blah, blah, blah. And they just overcomplicated the whole thing. No, what the jury decided ultimately, and somebody said this on Twitter the best at the time, but it was like, this case just boils down to three people went down to the kennels, two of them died and one of them lied. That's it. That's the whole case in a nutshell.

[00:19:03] **Eric Bland:** That rhymed. Two of them died and one of them lied.

[00:19:07] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah, exactly.

[00:19:09] **Eric Bland:** And went back on a ride, on his golf cart.

[00:19:12] **Liz Farrell:** Good Lord Eric. What a children's book. Did you guys notice how the little excerpts of the inner workings of Dick and Jim and their strategy? So like, they were filming themselves after court each day in their little compound that they rented in Colleton county and, you know, you can see them like working out like well how do we answer the I did them so wrong and they did them so wrong question. And like, for them to have had the foresight and the, I guess, plan to film themselves and in Dick's office, obviously they were always working toward this goal, right? Or at least had that thought in their head that we will be doing a documentary on this or that we will be doing, you know, some sort, this is going to end up, we're going to need the media for this, or something like that. So like, it was, it left a bad taste in my mouth. Because these guys are the ones accusing everybody else of the exact thing that they're doing, right? So I don't know. Did you guys, what did you guys think of that?

[00:20:08] **Eric Bland:** It's a waiver of attorney-client privilege. It's a waiver of your work product and your mental impressions. You know, in this, what was the one in Idaho? Steven, what was it? *The Making of a Murderer*—Avery, Steven Avery. It was already over when the lawyer spoke and gave his analysis and his mental impressions and his work product. This case isn't over yet. It's on appeal. It could



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come back for a new trial, and Dick and Jim are revealing their work product and their strategy. And then with what we learn this week, with what Jim did with Alex in violating the Department of Correction rules, they're letting their their client speak to the media at a time when he has a case on appeal.

[00:21:01] **Liz Farrell:** Mandy, why don't you tell us about that. Tell us about why Jim is in trouble. One of the funnier elements of this.

[00:21:08] **Eric Bland:** He should be in big trouble. He should be in bar trouble.

[00:21:11] **Liz Farrell:** Yeah, of course.

[00:21:12] **Eric Bland:** Okay. I'm not I'm not an advocate of somebody, you know, getting their ticket pulled, but he knows the rules. And you cannot act in concert with your client to violate the law that convicted felons cannot speak to the media.

[00:21:28] **Mandy Matney:** Okay, what he did was, Tim Griffin facilitated phone calls, and it was of Alex reading his diary. Was that right? Of Alex reading his daily diary, which the writing was very weird. Did you notice that toom, Liz?

[00:21:46] **Liz Farrell:** Oh, my God.

[00:21:49] **Eric Bland:** Yeah, we need an FBI guy to look at the writing to say, "Okay, this is what this means. He's this. He's that."

[00:21:55] **Mandy Matney:** Psycho.

[00:21:56] **Liz Farrell:** Oh, my God, that gave him a mad lib. You know that he was mad libbing it. And they're like, "Alex, just fill in the word." Because there's no way that he's sitting. I would love to know from Becky Hill whether she ever caught him, you know, dear diary-ing it back in the cell there. I just don't believe it.

[00:22:14] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah, so he facilitated these phone calls where Alex reads his daily diary about what happened after the trial, and he sold it to Fox News. I don't know if sold was technically the term that they used, but it seems like he gave it to Fox News.



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[00:22:30] **Liz Farrell:** I don't think he was donating it.

[00:22:32] **Eric Bland:** They were trying to monetize this trial from the get go. There was a dual purpose, sure. They were defending Alex and they wanted him to go, but they were monetizing a murder. That's what this was all about. For Dick and Jim, for Alex, for Buster, it was a money grab folks.

[00:22:49] **Mandy Matney:** And you know what really makes me mad about that, I've been accused of making money off of this family and all sorts of crap, including from Jim Griffin's own daughter has come up, come after me on Twitter being like, "How much money are you making, Mandy? Na na na na na." I am not supporting a murderer. There is a difference. We actually did a lot of work to expose, to give a voice to victims and expose the truth and actually try to change a system for the better. They are milking and milking and milking every dollar that they, and like, morals are just out the window with them. There's no such thing as morals, ethics, rules, whatever. And I think that that's really the part that I wish a lot more South Carolina lawyers would get angry and upset and actually do something about what's going on here. Because everybody else knows that they can't, they can't just bend the rules like Dick and Jim do. Everyone else knows that they can't, they would never do that to their client because they would get in huge trouble.

[00:23:51] **Eric Bland:** Jim was already excoriated by Judge Newman in the middle of the trial. What happened? What was that about? I forget, but there was something he did where, did he talk to somebody? What happened during the trial that he was...

[00:24:02] **Liz Farrell:** He shared Kathleen Parker's Washington Post column about how bad the crime scene was, meaning how bad Kathleen Parker criticized SLED for how they handled the crime scene. And he shared that and yeah, that was embarrassing. Very embarrassing for him.

[00:24:19] **Mandy Matney:** Right, but he knows. And I mean, I think that that's the sad part about all of this, is that that's the state that we're in. These guys know that they can just do whatever and get away with it, and they have. Like, oh, Alex doesn't care, and Alex got hit with two more charges of like 30 days and more (inaduble) lifetime prison sentence. That doesn't matter. Like you can keep charging him forever, charge the other people who are helping him. Do something about the people that are



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facilitating this madness and continuing it. And also like, the whole thing just seemed like Dick and Jim orchestrated it. And the other thing that I kept thinking about in the last day is like, do these guys love money this much? Like everybody talks about how Dick Harpootlian can make millions of dollars in a snap of his fingers, so like, this seems like a lot of effort and a lot of time commitment. Or do they just want to be right? Do they just refuse to give up even when they've lost big time? And this is their one last thing to try to win the public over? Does that matter to them? I just don't understand it.

[00:25:21] **Liz Farrell:** I think we need to know who, I mean, we're never going to find this out probably, but who paid? Like, who is giving them this advice? And why? So what, who's given them the advice that they should do this on Fox, and we know that obviously Fox is probably the only offer that they had, and the only one willing to give them, I would assume, all the editing rights that they had over this. But additionally, you guys noticed that in the photos that they used that included Randy Murdaugh. They blurred over Randy's face several times. Like this wasn't just the one photo of him and his father and his grandfather. So obviously, he didn't want anything to do with this, or he wants the appearance of not wanting anything to do with this. I don't know if that's him toeing the line again, or what?

[00:26:02] **Mandy Matney:** I just thought it was really weird how it was just very obvious his face was the one face of the family. That happened a couple times where there would be like everyone at P.M.P.E.D. from 1992 and then Randy's face is the one that's blurred out. And it's like, why wouldn't Ronnie Crosby want his face blurred out, or Mark Ball, or all these other guys? This is just weird. And we've, you know, heard behind the scenes that Randy is doing a little bit of distancing. But it was also kind of surprising to me that John Marvin didn't speak, come to think of it.

[00:26:34] **Liz Farrell:** Yeah, I wonder. I wonder why. Maybe no one wanted to hear from him. I don't know. I don't know why he wouldn't have spoken.

[00:26:40] **Eric Bland:** Is Randy distancing himself because it's transactional for the law firm, that it's better for the law firm that he does that instead of going on TV and saying, "I believe my brother's innocent?" Is he, you know, you got to question everything that every Murdaugh does. You know, what are, what's the motive? What's the reason behind it? You can't just take anything at face value.



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[00:27:01] **Liz Farrell:** No, I think, I wonder if he had his face blurred just so there was no mention? I don't know. To me, it's more conspicuous this way, so I'm not really sure why that decision was made. But I was reminded in looking at some of the footage from the courtroom that P.M.P.E.D's attorney looked like he was sitting with the family, or at least on Alex's, you know, side or you know, around the area of the family. I can't remember. I'm pretty sure it was in the same row. But it's it's kind of interesting to me that like, because when you look at what P.M.P.E.D, members of P.M.P.E.D, were saying from the stand and then like what they should feel about Alex at that point, why is their attorney—it just seems, it seems like it doesn't, they forget what the optics are of what this stuff looks like to the rest of us that are paying attention, because it just makes it all look like this is just a lie and just theater, and actually they're all okay with each other because of whatever the reason is that Maggie and Paul are dead. Whatever that is, whatever the reason the money was being stolen, all of that. There's gotta be something more than what we're seeing here—I think that's my ultimate takeaway is that there's, this more than ever, I'm convinced that there's something more than a whole bunch of people are involved in. That's basically the conclusion for me.

[00:28:18] **Mandy Matney:** Right. Because again, why do they keep doubling down? And why did they care so much about doing all of this? And again, so much effort and so much risk with, like you said, Dick Harpootlian going on Fox News, what is he doing? His reputation has already been tanked, but this is just making it worse. Everything they're making worse, and I don't understand it, but they seem so desperate to still want to control the narrative. And also, like you said, with Dana Kennedy slipping that in of like, it's not over, there's going to be something else, that was just ominous and creepy, and I don't understand it.

[00:28:57] **Liz Farrell:** And what is she like, what's her insight on that matter? And if you're a reporter, I feel like maybe if you do have some insight in that, maybe share it. Maybe, what were you told that's kind of what's coming down the pipeline? But do you think that, because again like we realized throughout the trial, that Alex obviously had—I know that Jim and Dick deny this—but obviously Alex had a lot to say about how his defense strategy was going to go down. Do you think this is just them, once again, following what the family wants and not having the power to say no to that?

[00:29:29] **Eric Bland:** No.



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[00:29:30] **Liz Farrell:** Could that, could it be that simple?

[00:29:31] **Eric Bland:** No, they're part of it.

[00:29:32] **Liz Farrell:** So you think Dick could say no to them? And I just, I don't understand how he doesn't say no to them then, or how it's just, I don't know. It's baffling to me. I don't know how to say it otherwise.

[00:29:44] **Eric Bland:** Well, yeah. I mean, why would Jim risk his reputation to benefit Alex at the Department of Corrections when he's a criminal lawyer, and he's going to have to go into the prison and get the cooperation of wardens and guards and supervisors? And now they know that he's circumventing rules. I mean, what, why is Jim going so far over the cliff for a guy like this? What could be the reason? And the only reason is they're all the same. They're part of the same group of people, not the kind of people that we associate with, or I eat dinner with her, or I work out, or I spend my day with. It's just a total different group of people. They're talking to a very small audience. It's the Forest Lake, and that's the white bread country club that I that's in our town here. Every town has got a white bread Country Club. That's the audience they're talking to.

[00:30:40] **Liz Farrell:** And Mandy, you pointed out something earlier to me about the reason why felons are not allowed to speak to the media in South Carolina. And Jim completely disregarded, like, there's a reason for this, do you want to share?

[00:30:54] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah, SCDC—and I thought that they did a really good job with the communications behind this. I like their transparency. They were open, like we weren't hearing anything that anything was going on, it was just like, bam, all of a sudden. And I also think that this that had to do with the sudden release. It was just all too fast and too weird—but SCDC said, the reason that they do, that they ban inmates from being able to talk to the media is because they believe that victims have a right to not hear from their offenders after they get convicted. And I support that entirely. You shouldn't have to turn on the news to hear somebody be victimized, right? To be victimized over. You, as CDC is saying, you lost your rights when you got convicted. You lost your rights to talk to the media, you lost your rights to continue to victimize people, and we're putting a stop to that. What did you think of that, Liz?



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[00:31:49] **Liz Farrell:** I'm sure that in some warped way, Jim and Dick rationalized it by saying, "Well, Busters' the victim, so he's fine with it," but there's obviously more victims there. And I would love to know what Maggie's family thinks of all this because I truly was offended. You know, Maggie is a complicated character. She's always been for us because of what we knew about sort of what she was saying behind the scenes during the boat crash time, but we've learned so much more about her since the murders from people in her life, and we understand her relationship with Alex to have been fraught. That, you know, Dick might want to claim that Maggie was a love of Alex's life, and maybe on some level that was true, but the truth is is that it was not a happy marriage. They might have appeared happy and there might have been times where they were happy, but ultimately, we know that there were issues there, and we noticed that. And we just know that, we know that their relationship from the very beginning was fraught. So I want to know what your family thinks, because a lot of the photos they used of her, honestly, if I were dead, and we're looking down on earth and saw what they were using of me, and I saw that they look like what they were using of Maggie, I'd be pretty upset. And one of the things that Alex said in his dear diary was that Maggie and Paul we're gonna get lost in all of this. And I feel like Maggie and Paul kind of got lost in all of this, of this documentary in and of itself. Because again, it just goes back to like Alex describing Maggie and basically only being able to describe her as a woman and a mother and a wife. And that's it, no doubt to it.

[00:33:20] **Eric Bland:** Is it as simple as Buster cannot confront the possibility because he has to live out his life that his father is this kind of murderer? Is it that simple? Is it that he cannot confront the truth? And so it's easier for him to say on one hand, he steals, he's a liar, he's a cheat, he's a psychopath. I mean, that is an amazing, amazing admission. And then to say but he had nothing to do with the murder, but knows that he was down at the kennels. So, you know, is this just as simple as him saying, I refuse to confront the obvious? Mandy?

[00:34:03] **Mandy Matney:** I was thinking about that same thing and still thinking about it, and the only thing that I can come up with is it's very clear that Buster still has to play the game. And whatever game that is with whoever is behind his father, I don't think he has a choice to actually stop and think about whether or not his father killed his mother and brother. I think that he knows that to survive and to keep getting Murdaugh money, and to, I mean, he doesn't have a lot of livelihood outside of his circle because of the way that he lives his life. And I think that he's, I think he



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has a lot of outside pressure just to believe that lie and you don't even think about it twice. What do you think, Liz?

[00:34:54] **Liz Farrell:** I totally, totally agree with that assessment. I completely agree with that. Totally, totally agree with that. That is exactly, like there is, I also think that—I don't know if I should say this—but I feel like after watching this, I believe that Buster knows his dad did this. Is that a crazy takeaway?

[00:35:11] **Mandy Matney:** I think it's just really horrible too of Dick and Jim to not stop and actually really care about Buster's reputation and how much worse that this could damage it, and I don't think they care at all about Buster after watching that. I think that they just wanted to get their point across, and they wanted to write their narrative, and they weren't going to, I mean Buster is still, he's still a victim. He's still a grieving son and brother and I think it was like, it was like they manipulated him a lot. And he had his own decision. I mean, he made his own decision to contribute to that, but just shame on them. I just think shame on Dick and Jim.

[00:35:53] **Eric Bland:** Twenty-seven years old guys. Let's not, let's, let's not set, he's not 16-years-old, he's a man. He's a grown ass man.

[00:36:01] **Mandy Matney:** That's true.

[00:36:02] **Eric Bland:** And he has a right to say, "No, I'm not doing that. No, I'm not going to be malleable. You're not going to move me on a board like a chess piece." You know, we're infantilizing him. You said that one time, Liz. He's a grown ass man.

[00:36:31] **Liz Farrell:** There were moments when I was watching this where I just, I felt so horrible for Buster. Not just that he was doing this, but just, he just looks dead inside. Like he just looks like, I mean, where do you go? And he's just very rehearsed, very wanting to please. It's the same observations that we had during the trial. Do you guys remember when—several people noticed this—when court was over for the day or when Alex was about to leave the room, Buster would turn to look at his father, like waiting for his father to turn back. And you know that moment where you want the person that you can't be with and that you love turns and recognizes you, and it just felt like, I feel like Buster has unrequited love for his dad. I think that yes, he has some good memories of him that he can go through and whatever those memories are. Maybe those are kind of a lie when you look back on things. Maggie,



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if we're gonna say that Maggie and Alex were good as a couple, I think we can say they were good at making their sons believe that their life was amazing, or their life was great, and that they were special, and this was a special life. You know? Other than that, I don't know. I think Buster has a long life ahead of him.

[00:37:37] **Mandy Matney:** I thought it was just really strange that Buster said that about his parents had the ideal marriage, and a marriage that he wanted to have one day. And that his entire, like he painted his childhood and his family life like picture-perfect. Oh, and he said that his parents never had favorites or anything, which I've heard that that wasn't true. That Buster was always the favorite and that Paul was the outcast of the family. And I mean, we've kind of seen some evidence of that, especially with what happened. And it's just, I just thought that that seemed like a brainwashed comment. Like he was brain, he was told over and over again, like your parents had the ideal marriage, your parents had a marriage that you'd aspire to, but it was, there was no honesty, there was no truth to it. It just did not feel authentic, whatsoever, or believable.

[00:38:30] **Eric Bland:** Listen, my father was my best friend. My father was the best man in my wedding. I cry all the time when I think about my dad. I have him in an urn, and I look at him every morning and night. But if it came out that my father stole from clients, and my father lied his entire professional career almost, and my father lied to me about the last time he saw my brother, Richard or Robbie, and my mother, and did it for two years, I'm sorry, folks, but I would have to look at my father differently. I wouldn't be able to compartmentalize that monster and say, "Well, that's not my dad. My dad's the guy that I went to the Gamecock games with or I drank beer or we shot the guns with." I'm sorry, as a grown man, you have to ask yourself the hard questions and you have to look back on your life and say, "Was this an act? Or were my parents really putting on an act for the world? And was this monster my dad, who every day stole from people and lied to his partners and lied to his wife and lied to us? And then lied to me about the death of my mother and brother?" I'm sorry, guys. He's just not somebody that I take seriously. I don't take Buster seriously at this point. I can't.

[00:39:58] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah, and you make good point. And I was thinking about this too, he admitted that he believes that his father is a psychopath. Well, how can you think that your parents have the ideal marriage and your father was also a psychopath at the same time? And that's super insulting to Maggie to assume that



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she was just cool with him being a psycho and a liar and a cheat and manipulator, which all these things that he admitted his father doing. So those, those two things cannot be true. And Buster has to realize that as a 27-year-old man.

[00:40:33] **Liz Farrell:** Also psychopaths aren't capable of love. They're capable at mimicking love. So everything that we see, and it's always the go to, right? Like they were having this convivial moment right before they got killed on video that shows that they were a happy family. That's used as evidence as to why Alex couldn't have killed him because he demonstrably loved them. But psychopaths have to fake it through every day, and I don't know that you can be half a psychopath. I mean, I don't know. I don't think that you can. I think you're either you are or you aren't the box you checked, and once you check it, all bets are off.

[00:41:05] **Mandy Matney:** If you're gonna tell the story, you cannot just brush over the victims in the way that they did, and it was really insulting. Maggie, Paul, Gloria, all of them. They treated them like little puzzle pieces instead of people who lost their lives and should be honored and should be...

[00:41:27] **Eric Bland:** Including Stephen Smith.

[00:41:28] **Mandy Matney:** And Stephen too. Like Stephen was just a, "Oh, this is why we should all feel sorry for Buster." And instead of well, he was the person whose death we still don't know what happened, and it also doesn't change the fact that his name was, that the Murdaugh name was all over that case file, and it went completely ignored until what happened. Until 2021. So that's, but going back to the Gloria photo, it really really bothered me too, because it just showed like how they viewed he, which was the help, the background player. She's there to literally help you do anything, but she's not there as a human being. And they didn't talk about her like a human being. Buster has said very distant things about her, that it wasn't like somebody that was in his house every day. It was like a servant. It's just strange.

[00:42:20] **Eric Bland:** Well, regarding Stephen Smith, I noticed the similarity between what Alex said and what Buster said. Alex said it didn't happen. She didn't get tripped by the dogs. And it was rather convenient that the two witnesses who could dispute that are dead, Maggie and Paul. The same thing Buster said about where he was at Stephen Smith's murder. And I'm not accusing Buster of anything, but he used the same unprovable excuse that his father used. I was at the beach



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house with Maggie and Paul. Well, Maggie and Paul are dead. There's no way to verify that. And again, I'm not accusing Buster, but it just opens up another can and creates more questions than answers.

[00:43:05] **Liz Farrell:** I was gonna say that, that there's a sort of, I guess, going into this it was, I don't know the Buster did it. All we could say and all we have said is that his name is in that file. But after watching this and some of the way, the ways he responded to the reporter's questions, and then he repeated the phrase that was in his press release that Jim put out, which is that he unequivocally, unequivocally denied anything that you've just read. I think you just said, you know, he said. So there's some mushy wording there that wasn't unequivocal to me. And like you said, it raises more questions and answers, and that Edisto Beach alibi is going to come back. I think we're going to hear about that again. I think that that's going to come up again because I think it is provable.

[00:43:51] **Mandy Matney:** Well and something else, it was just bad journalism. I was watching that part again and noticed that they, Martha McCollum said, was asking Buster about having a relationship with Stephen and she was putting it on Stephen's family that all of these rumors. Did you guys catch that? She said that Stephen's sister and Stephen's brother--which is not what happened. I mean, Liz and I talked to Stephanie in 2019 and she said, "I don't really think, I don't really like, that was just what I was hearing so I told my mom. But I didn't really think they were in a relationship. I don't know"--and his brother said the same thing, which was like, "Mom, I'm just hearing all the stuff." They never, the way that those two questions were phrased really bothered me because they were like his sister and his brother said that you were in a relationship with Stephen. What do you have to say about that? And it's like, excuse me? No, they didn't. And why are you blaming the Smiths on this and why are you putting words into their mouths, and again, that just adds to the rumor mill and adds to all the suspicions, and it doesn't help anything.

[00:45:01] **Liz Farrell:** No, but it's Buster's friends who were telling law enforcement that there was a relationship, and it was Buster's friends telling each other. That's where the rumors are coming from. It's from their circles of friends. So that is significant. You're so right. I'm so glad you pointed that out Mandy, because that, that's exactly what they're trying to do is like, neutralize it being like, "Well, Stephen Smith's family says it, so you know, maybe that's where it came from?" No, it didn't.



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It came from Buster's own friends. It came from Paul's own friends. So I don't know what your answer to that is, Martha McCallum.

[00:45:33] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah, and it just seemed like, it seemed like that was a spoon-fed question that Dick and Jim were like, "How about you say this." And she did no fact checking and no actual journalism, which is reading that case file, like we have, front to back, front to back a million times, and you're not going to find that in that case file. You're going to find that the family was saying, "We're hearing all of these things. We're hearing that this is weird, we just want you to look into it," and they never stated anything as fact, as far as the rumors that Buster and him were in a relationship. And that just really made me mad and that was extremely insulting to the Smith family.

[00:46:12] **Eric Bland:** Liz, do you have any comment about the media's interest in a recent arrest and trial with the name of somebody who is mentioned in the Stephen Smith file? Patrick Wilson, do you think there's any connection at all with him being arrested in Greenville and then transported and tried in Hampton County for an open container charge and still being in jail? And now all of a sudden the media is really interested in that, or It's just a coincidence?

[00:46:42] **Liz Farrell:** No, there's no coincidences, Eric. I don't think there's a single coincidence. So I guess what would be interesting, I think we'd have to look into every little piece of this, including who signed the warrant who got who got him back and all that, and who's representing him and all of that, because obviously, we don't know. Until SLED makes an arrest or two, we're not going to know. And we don't know what he knows. We don't know if he's part of it or not, but we also know that he was represented by Cory Fleming at one point, and we know that his charges went away shortly after he came forward to say that he knew that another person. He was charged with assault, attempted murder. Three charges. I think they were reduced, too.

[00:47:24] **Mandy Matney:** Yeah, he shot at a family.

[00:47:26] **Eric Bland:** And the charge went away? So I can go shoot, I can go shoot at somebody and the charges just go away? That's how it happens?



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[00:47:33] **Liz Farrell:** Well, it will in Hampton County. Which reminds me, I'm sorry, I know this is apropos of nothing maybe, but another thing Mandy and I were talking about is like, I think throughout this documentary there was so much denialism from everyone that it sort of, just like it was an overload for my brain. But the guy with a beard—and I'm purposely, I'm going to be honest, I'm purposely not saying his name, because it doesn't deserve to be said—but the guy with a beard mentioned that like if you got into trouble, like the Murdaughs were the ones who helped you. Like this is, they were great people, like the Murdochs are who you went to. And we're like, exactly. What are you, this is exactly what we've been talking about, which is this is why so many people are loyal to them, case in point, that these are the people, the Murdaughs are the ones that helped you. They were the...

[00:48:14] **Eric Bland:** They fixed.

[00:48:16] **Liz Farrell:** Right, they fixed your problems. So this is, this is where that, all that loyalty came from. And again, like hearing Creighton, at one point, in his interview was saying that he was like, "Why do people lie?" Well, it's to cover up wrongdoing, right? So you've got this entire crew of people in this documentary, commenting on these, like just nitpicking these little pieces of evidence or little events that happened, every single one of which has an answer and an explanation. And they're focusing so myopically on it, because it works in their favor, and it allows them to have the argument that they're having, but they're ignoring the bigger picture here, which is that this man has lied in every possible way all the time, and has done these other things. And he is, this raincoat looks like a tarp, I'm sorry. Like, these things that they're ignoring, that they're just like chuckling away like the rest of us are idiots for believing that like Murdaugh did this, I don't know. I just, I take offense to the whole thing. But I do think that there is this like willful denialism happening right now, and maybe, maybe it's because they still need the Murdaughs to help them. Maybe some of those people still need the Murdaughs, right? They need that name to mean something so that they can get something from it.

[00:49:27] **Eric Bland:** I agree. Now wrapping up, I am going to have a smile on my face over Labor Day weekend knowing that Alex doesn't have a tablet, can't communicate with the lovers of the world, and he can't use his phone. He can't. He lost phone privileges. So he is going to experience what it's like to be alone, cut off from the world, except from the little community that he lives in in prison, and he has nobody to blame but himself and his lawyers, because his lawyer should have



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said, "No, Alex. We can't do this because you are going to break the prison regulations."

[00:50:06] **Liz Farrell:** Mandy, do you believe he's not going to have a phone and he's going to lose all privileges? Do you believe that?

[00:50:11] **Mandy Matney:** No, and it's funny because like as you were talking about like the lie on lie on lie that have been exposed by this guy and the series of deniability that went on in that, and it's just so ironic that the whole, the whole thing is kind of shaped around another rule-breaking lie, another manipulation. That he abused the system and didn't think the rules applied to him, so that's why he's doing this whole documentary. It's ridiculous. And again, they all need a giant wake up call.

[00:50:43] **Eric Bland:** We also learned that he's got a friend in prison because that friend let him use his PIN number. So he's made a friend who let Alex use his own PIN number.

[00:50:53] **Liz Farrell:** And here we thought he was in solitary being protected. Nice. Another lie probably. I have a feeling this isn't gonna be the last time we talked about this, by the way. I think it's gonna come up again. So cups down.

[00:51:05] **Mandy Matney:** Cups down.

[00:51:06] **Eric Bland:** Cups down. Everybody be safe.

[00:51:11] **Mandy Matney:** This *Cup of Justice* episode 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 LUNASHARK Productions.