



EPISODE 62: Asking the Experts... Double Feature Crossover Episode with Attorney Emily D. Baker and Crime Analyst Laura Richards

Mandy Matney 00:04

Hello and Happy New Year! As you may have learned from the last episode of Season Two of *True Sunlight* last week, 2023 was a rollercoaster of ups and downs, confronting evil and rallying action where change is desperately needed. On Friday's "Cups Up to the Holiday's" party here on Hilton Head we saw in real life the power and emotional connections we are bridging at LunaShark. Shout out to Renee, Mike Abby, Steve and Chris from The Westin's Hilton Head team for making Friday so special. It was incredibly encouraging to see over 100 members join Eric, Sandy and I from all over the Low Country and beyond. Places like Maryland, West Virginia and Pennsylvania, and more. We were so proud to honor our special members, Ed, Stephanie, and Jeff with our inaugural Sharky Awards, appreciating y'all with a token to say, "Thank you," for going above and beyond. Eric, Liz and I took this last week off from *COJ* to enjoy time with those who matter the most to us. So today's show is going to be a little different. In 2024 we plan to share new methods and platforms to expose new truth, give voice to new victims and get the story straight. Like we hoped to do last May, we are expanding our scope on True Sunlight and adding new voices to *Cup of Justice* with new interviews like the ones you will hear today. Most of all, we are focusing on welcoming new members to the LunaShark Premium platform with a membership drive in January. On the first episode of season two of *COJ* we are sharing segments from interviews and content the premium members regularly enjoy. Today we will be sharing my conversations with two amazing women, Emily D. Baker, a legal genius and host of a powerful YouTube channel with almost a million subscribers. Emily is an attorney who covers everything from Johnny Depp to Murdaugh and beyond. Stay tuned for more



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episodes like this with EB and Liz getting the scoop on everything under the sun. And today we will also share parts of my thought provoking interview with Laura Richards, who hosts a magnificent podcast *Crime Analyst*. Laura is an award winning criminal behavioral analyst, formerly of New Scotland Yard and an international expert on domestic abuse, coercive control, stalking, sexual violence, homicide and risk assessment. Learn more about Emily D Baker and Laura Richards by searching on YouTube or by clicking the links in the description. And stay tuned for an extra awesome episode of True Sunlight that we will be publishing this Thursday. All that being said, let's get into it.

Mandy Matney 03:09

Hello, everyone. This is so exciting. This is Emily Baker. Emily is probably one of my favorite people that I've met throughout this whole crazy Murdaugh situation. A lot of y'all have sent me her stuff along the way and said, "She shouted out to you on her podcast and I heard of you." We have a lot of crossover fans so this is really exciting. I feel like a lot of people have said, this is like the crossover that I've always wanted. Have you seen those comments?

Emily D. Baker 03:43

I'm here for it. Because it's the crossover I've always wanted.

Mandy Matney 03:46

Me too and it just took a minute, but I'm so excited. So Emily, if you want to start out by just introducing yourself and explaining what you do. You



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started out as a district attorney, correct? In California, and now, do you identify yourself as a law tuber?

Emily D. Baker 04:06

I will tell you the story about how that phrase came about in a minute. But I'm Emily D. Baker. For those of you that don't know me, I've been a lawyer for over 17 years. I was a deputy district attorney in LA County for over 10 so I am a trial attorney by nature. When I left doing that, I was a consultant for mostly small and online businesses. There weren't a lot of attorneys in that space that took particularly what female entrepreneurs did seriously. So somebody would be making hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars doing something that more traditional attorneys considered like a cute hobby. And I'm like, "No, you have you a business and tax implications and you need all the things that any other business would need." Whether you're a content creator or you're selling crochet patterns, you have a business and so I moved into consulting and I had a podcast that supported that. And then, when a lot of online business owners, particularly my clients, had all their kids home to do distance learning in 2020, we stopped all of our work. I stopped. The same thing happened to me, all of us just took a collective like gasp and a pause. And then the podcast started to grow. And I started doing more legal commentary. And I realized that in the legal commentary space, there aren't as many lawyers that have extensive trial work. A lot of lawyers have great work working for firms or who worked in civil, but there aren't a lot of litigators. I think it's because litigators love to talk. And they want to be in court litigating. So a lot of litigators don't do this because they're busy doing other things. And there aren't that many. And I realized there was room and need to



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break down not just civil cases, but criminal cases as well. And I tried to balance the two, I was a research attorney for civil judges so my background in civil is on kind of the judge's side and then in court on the criminal side. And it's been great. There's these cases that capture everyone's interest. But people don't always understand the nuts and bolts of the legal side. And often traditional media will cover the beginning of the story, but not always follow it through to the end, like even with Depp v. Heard, covered it to verdict, but there's still appeals that happened afterwards. There's still ongoing litigation now. Same with Murdaugh. Ah, yes, there was a murder trial, And yes, there was a verdict. But there's an appeal pending and a ton of litigation still going on around him. So I like covering the story all the way through, even though that story sometimes takes years to tell.

Mandy Matney 06:37

Yeah, I think we definitely relate on that. And deep dives. Our audiences just really crave deep dives, and understanding the law and this growing community of people that are interested in law and interested in like how the court works, and they're not just...it's not the gross part of true crime. It's like kind of...it's a little nerdy, but it's great, like...

Emily D. Baker 07:02

Oh, it's a lot nerdy, and it's great. And it's educating.

Mandy Matney 07:05

And it's, yeah, and it's educating people, and it's also getting like younger, younger girls and teenagers interested in law. And I love that.



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You mentioned Depp v. Heard and that was a big moment for you. That trial was kind of your blow up.

Emily D. Baker 07:22

It was huge. And I thought my YouTube channel had kind of grown before that, because I had gone from like, I when I started doing this, specifically, because I've been on YouTube for quite a long time. But when I started doing legal coverage, specifically after I left the office and I could do that I was just at about 5,000 subscribers in October 2020. And I was thrilled, I was like, "I never thought I would hit this milestone." And then just in May 2021, I had hit 100,000. And I was like, "Okay, well, we're done. This is where we've gone on YouTube. I'm so excited." And then the Depp v. Heard case started a year after that. And everything shifted and my live streams were, my top live concurrent viewers, were at 370,000 live concurrent viewers. It's a lot of people. And it was a case that because there was a celebrity, I thought people would be interested in maybe the highlights. I was really surprised how many people were interested in watching edited video depositions that were presented as testimony and understanding how a civil case works. Because we often see cases highlighted and streamed that are criminal, it's very rare to see a case streamed that's civil, and then you have two celebrities involved. And you have lawyers that are kind of characters and that...just the interest takes off from there.

Mandy Matney 08:40

Isn't that exciting when like...I was there in a very similar place where I really didn't have like a goal number of what I wanted to...I thought if 100 people or 1,000 people listened to me, I didn't know, but when you



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hit it, and then you keep going. It's a little shocking. And I can't imagine I mean, our podcasts aren't live well, we don't...I haven't gotten those numbers live. But I always think about when I get behind the mic of like, this is like a few stadiums full of people that are listening to what I'm saying. And I'm kind of glad that they're not all in front of me at the same time because I would get very nervous, but it's just really cool. And it's an organic growth and this all these independent creators that are just rising up like you and I and that's been really exciting to watch and I feel like it's a big threat to traditional media. But how did you...how do you think the Depp v. Heard trial really changed this trial coverage, case coverage? Kind of the true crime world also, it's not really true crime, but it's...

Emily D. Baker 09:56

I mean, my audience started calling it court casting because there's times I really do feel like an MMA sports commentator where I'm screaming, "No! God, no! That's not the right objection. What did you do?" And so there's times I really do feel like a sports commentator, when I'm doing live trial coverage, because it's not all just breaking down. Sometimes it's actually, well me breaking down and just screaming at what's going on in trial, which I love getting to do. Because if you're sitting in court, in traditional media, taking notes, you can't really let your face detail how you're feeling for a jury, or at least I don't think you should. I started watching trials when I was in undergrad in a courthouse I ended up practicing in as a DA. And I remember one of the bailiffs coming over and being like, "I know you're watching for school." I was an undergrad at the time. He's like, "But your face." And I was like, "What?" He's like, "You keep making faces at the



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things people are telling. You can't let your face like distract the jury or dissuade what they might be thinking or they might be wondering what you're thinking, it kind of takes away, you need to sit here, neutrally." And I was like, "Okay, got it." Like, I got my face was giving me away. And that happened to me in court, too. I used to get in trouble, because my face was a bit too expressive sitting at counsel table, which makes great commentary. But I think it changed...I've seen the traditional media companies changing the way they're doing trial coverage. I can't imagine that's for any other reason than seeing how successful the way that content creators have covered things. And I think traditional media doesn't see an audience beyond a three-minute soundbite. And content creators, like us, have proven that there's an audience that doesn't want to be spoken down to they want to be included in the conversation. And they're capable of having longer, more nuanced conversations about really complex and complicated issues. And I think it is starting to shift the way traditional media shows up. Particularly on social media and on YouTube. Because YouTube's coverage smashed coverage everywhere else of Depp v. Heard. It's where people wanted to watch the trial, because you can talk about it in real time too. You can chat about it when it's happening. And people wanted to watch it and talk about it. They had YouTube up at their offices and were just talking about this trial the way that we saw during the OJ Simpson case. It was everybody was talking about it when I went to, you know, Starbucks people were talking about it. And that's kind of a rare thing with trials and it really has shifted and allowed YouTube to be the best place to watch trial coverage because you also can interact.



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Mandy Matney 12:31

It is. I've considered it like sports a lot of time and like you're rooting for your team and you feel like a part of a community by being on one side of the situation and you can like, it's a lot like sports but it's educational.

Emily D. Baker 12:48

The referee still wears black, you know, sitting up on the bench.

Mandy Matney 12:53

Right! But what got you interested in the Murdaugh story? And let's go back, you started following the Murdaugh story before the Depp v. Heard trial? Correct?

Emily D. Baker 13:02

I did. And I started covering it right after the roadside incident. Because I was like, "Wait a second, you're telling me there's a lawyer in South Carolina that got shot in the head on the side of the road, but then it's coming out within days that that was actually staged with insurance? And my audience really came to me and was like, "Look, you're covering the Girardi case in Los Angeles," huge plaintiff's lawyer, hundreds of millions of dollars. Wife, well, third wife was on *Real Housewives* or is on *Real Housewives of Beverly Hills*. They're like, "This is like a South Carolina Girardi unfolding. But also there's all these questionable deaths surrounding this family." I was like, "What?" So that's when I started, the roadside incident pulled me in and it was the kind of the corrupt lawyer angle that really caught my attention because now you have a lawyer in court admitting to insurance fraud and a staged, you know, suicide for



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hire plot. I'm like, "What is happening in this case?" And that's when I jumped in. And my first couple of times, diving into the case and looking at it, I'm like, "Wait, what? Wait, what?" The Satterfield case? Wait, what? On and on and on. My document, breaking it down and going through your past reporting and stuff it unwound in such an unbelievable way that I was immediately completely invested. And that's when I found your podcast on it because I'm like, "People have to be talking about this," but it wasn't being talked about as much at that time.

Mandy Matney 14:37

Yeah and I keep thinking about this recently, about how important that roadside shooting event was for a lot of reasons. But first of all, I mean, our podcasts like blew up. It was still a big case, but not a huge case before that happened.

Emily D. Baker 14:56

It was more regional, not national at that point.

Mandy Matney 14:59

Right. I'll never forget that weekend, I looked at my phone and got a notification from the news, a push notification from the *New York Times* saying, "Alex Murdaugh's shot in the head, blah, blah, blah." And I was like, "The New York Times is saying Alex Murdaugh in a headline and not even identifying who he is." This is just crazy. But also so important for people to understand Alex and people to understand the lengths that he would go to, to try to cover up all of his problems. Like, I think it was so important during the trial that the jury was able to see some of



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that because everything that Alex ever did was tried to manipulate and cover up his problems and fix things for himself. And the roadside shooting was so insane. It's like, what kind of person would stage their suicide, attempted murder, whatever so their son could get insurance money.

Emily D. Baker 15:58

Someone who's in a whole lot of debt and doesn't see any other way out, or someone who has very real consequences coming down on their head very quickly. And I think the trial showed that both of those circumstances were true. At the time of the roadside shooting, it was wild, watching that incident play out at trial and hearing from the witnesses, everything that really led up to it. And I agree with you that it was needed to walk the jury through everything that led up. Like when Creighton talked about a gathering storm. It was. It was a shitstorm is what it was that was gathering around Murdaugh and I think he didn't see any way out really. Once he got to the roadside shooting, I don't think he saw any way out. It was wild.

Mandy Matney 16:44

And somebody that actually believes that that's the way, you know, that like that they could convince everybody with such...we still...I still don't really believe he was shot. But I think he thought that he could just tell the world, "I was shot by this guy." And who knows if he was trying to set up Eddie Smith, and that all fell apart. But it was just, yeah, I'm still kind of recovering from those years of my life that it was just...I feel like I was constantly bouncing between stories within the story and breaking news that was happening all the time. And just all of this absurdity



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surrounding this situation. And I'm completely aware that I'm probably never going to find a story like this again. And I kind of honestly hope that I don't because...

Emily D. Baker 17:36

It's a lot. It's not a story. It's a saga is what it is. And I mean, you started pulling on the thread of the Satterfield case and how would you know that it would unwind to everything? I mean, by the...when I started paying attention, I thought this was attorney fraud. Like this is a big thing of attorney fraud. And they were talking about whether he had a drug habit and I'm like, "I don't know if I buy that or if this is just for court," but we're looking at a large amount of fraud and theft from clients. And then there's these other suspicious deaths. And there's this other misdealing, I think with the boat crash with Alex. And then when he got charged with the murder of Maggie and Paul, I was like, "Okay, so this has gone a completely different direction," because I hadn't really looked at the murder of Maggie and Paul much. I just kind of put it in the list of like all these kinds of suspicious things happen related to this family. But I'm looking at attorney fraud. When you started looking at the Satterfield fraud, were you like, "What? How much are we tugging on?" Did you think of it as a corruption story? Or were you always looking towards the suspicious deaths as like there's got to be answers here somewhere?

Mandy Matney 18:50

Well, I think it really had to deal with a lot of the sources who I was talking to in Hampton at the time, who kept saying over and over, there's a dead housekeeper and you need to look into that. And just



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kind of short like that. And there were rumors that she was pushed down the stairs, of course, back in 2019. And I couldn't believe that when Liz and I pulled that document and looked up her obituary and figured out that she worked for the Murdaugh's and we were like, "This is the housekeeper that everybody's talking about! Oh my god!" And then you just start to see red flags as a journalist who has sources that are close to these people. For instance, if I didn't have, if both of us didn't have our sources, we would have not have realized Cory Fleming was his best friend and why is Alex's best friend suing him on behalf...and why is there this other person Chad Westendorf, the personal representative for the Satterfield family? This is all just very...why is there like nothing about her death? All it says is she died and then also it said that she died in Hampton County and she didn't. But it was just red flag after red flag like, this is just really weird. And again, it wasn't...I was looking from the lens of what everybody was telling me and trying to figure out a way to prove it right or prove it wrong of like, what's going on here. Just a lot of people were feeding me all this information that led me to be highly suspicious of the entire Murdaugh family. And here we are now, years later. But yeah, let's go to the trial. You were one of the only I feel like law experts and big voices criticizing Dick and Jim. I didn't see a lot of that online. And why did you see...why do you think so many commenters really took their side and defended them and said that they were the best lawyers ever? Have you seen that before? And what did you think about that?

Emily D. Baker 21:02

People do like to pick sides. With lawyers, I have the really fortunate position of looking at the Murdaugh case through the lens of again,



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attorney fraud until he was charged with murder, but not knowing this family. I've been to South Carolina to see the Dave Matthews Band, but I'm not from the area. So I truly am outside looking in, which is what I appreciated about your podcast is getting a bit of an understanding of the area, getting a bit of the understanding of the people who live in the area and this family's grip on the area. And how that works. I'm familiar with small areas and powerful figures. It's just these were not my small areas and powerful figures. So I didn't come in with any reverence for any of the attorneys. I was critical of Dick and Jim in their motion practice, when I thought criticism was warranted. I was complimentary when I thought it was warranted. But the same for the prosecution as well, when I was like I, "What's going on here? And why are we spending so much time there?" Because again, I was a prosecutor. So often, it's easier for me to be critical of the prosecution, because that's the job I've done. And they bear the burden. And there were definitely times when I'm like, "Okay, okay, Meadors, we're getting a little dramatic here." But also, some of that is regionally appropriate. That's very different from practice in Los Angeles because you're not going to see that in LA. But you're going to see that...when he's staring into the eyes of the jury he knows if they're with him or not. And that's something you can't always see through the screen. But I saw a lot of people saying, "Oh, Dick, and Jim, you know, they have this on that." And I'm like, "Do they know though?" And I didn't love the way that we saw, particularly Dick, trying to take over the courtroom and almost be patronizing to the judge with like, "Okay, Your Honor, but you're going to do this." I know a million attorneys like that. I mean, a million is an exaggeration, but it's something that rubbed me the wrong way, in my practice, especially as a young attorney. And I made that very clear to



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my audience, like there's these attorneys whose reputations precede them. And they walk in as if they own the courtroom. They are the judge and the jury and the attorney and what they say is going to go and I was really tickled with how deliberate and methodical Judge Newman was in shutting those things down in every hearing. I was, I found him to be not just intelligent, but delightful. And not everyone agreed with me on that assessment of Judge Newman. But everything he did, I could understand how he was doing it. And he would cut Dick off, and he was like, "We're not allowing this to go this way today." And I really enjoyed watching that courtroom play out because there's a lot of big personalities in that courtroom.

Mandy Matney 23:45

Right. And I really loved how Newman like you said, there could have been a lot of situations that just escalated and spiraled into a circus, but he was just really good about just, "We're not doing that. No." And I think Dick Harpootlian a lot of times, he was just shocked by that. You can tell that he's had his whole career where judges would just say, "Okay, I guess it's gonna be the circus." But it's interesting what you said about Meadors. And I was back and forth about Meadors the whole time, like you said, being too dramatic. But it is, it's a southern courtroom, Colleton County is deeply Southern, not like Hilton Head where I live, where it's just a mixture of all different people. Colleton's a lot more locals, people born there, from there. And I do think that it was really smart of the prosecution ultimately to have Meadors on closing and just wrap everything up in that like Baptist southern lawyer voice that he had. Dick and Jim just did not have that relatability at all.



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Emily D. Baker 24:49

No, they kept trying to say like, "I'm just a country lawyer." I'm like, "Oh, the hell you are sir."

Mandy Matney 24:55

You're a billionaire. Not a billion... almost, you're really close to it. Like, no, yeah. And they just tried to play it up so much and it was patronizing and...but fascinating to watch ultimately. What were some of the biggest mistakes between both the prosecution and the defense during the Murdaugh trial that you noticed? Oh, gosh, I don't

Emily D. Baker 25:17

Oh, gosh, I don't know about like mistakes, mistakes. I think some of the moments that stuck out for me, the first thing was, you could see the internal struggle with Jim Griffin dealing with Murdaugh. And I think their third attorney who did tech, I am going to forget his name because I didn't pull it up before we talked. But their third attorney who did most of the technology, I think, might have been a better fit to deal with Murdaugh because it distances the personal relationship. And I wondered a lot of that throughout the trial. Because you could see times that Jim Griffin looked like he was doing his job, but also personally struggling. In asking questions and making argument, and I just wonder if he was too close. Because as an attorney, you want to do what's right for your client, but you also have to do your job. And you also have to ethically do your job. And it felt like those things were so close that you could see it. And I just wonder if Jim was too close to be really the lead counsel, doing a lot of the argument, doing a lot of the witnesses. And, also it seems like wrangling Alex and Alex's expectations



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and the strategy. So, the way that they apportioned their work was curious to me. I would have liked to see the younger attorney who did most of their technology a lot more in the trial. I think he was really strong on their team. I think he presented well, and he didn't, he didn't come across in the same almost patronizing way that Dick comes across in court to witnesses. I thought he would have been a better fit.

Mandy Matney 26:55

Yeah, that's interesting that you said that about Jim Griffin, because I could feel the exact same thing. And especially it all just kind of came crashing down on him in his closing argument. I remember just looking at him and it felt like being in the mind of somebody who is trying to convince themselves that their friend is not a murderer, of their wife and son. And it just did not come off as convincing. It came across as, "Oh my god, am I supporting this person?"

Emily D. Baker 27:27

It was really sad and heavy. And I felt very much for him. There were things Poot did that just pissed me off during the trial, kind of being flippant and things like that. But there were also things where he argued really well and was quite entertaining. And I'm sure a jury was charmed at the beginning and then annoyed by the end. But with Jim it was a different weight. And it felt heavy. And I think you're right, that the jury was probably looking at him wondering if he's processing this out loud and coming to that realization during his closing. Because I don't think his closing delivered as powerfully as it needed to.



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Mandy Matney 28:02

Yeah, I think it just came across as, "So we're not sure." Just him literally going through the evidence in his head and trying to say...trying to ultimately convince himself that his friend is not guilty versus...and yeah, I mean, Dick Harpootlian you could tell could care less. And I know that he was saying that to members of the media and like, "I get paid anyways, whatever."

Emily D. Baker 28:29

He seemed to really love a high profile case which you could tell. And again, I really did think that their third attorney was excellent. I wanted to see more from...Phillip Barber in the entirety of the case. And every time he came up, I was like, "Oh, this is going to be linear and clear. It's going to be a good cross examination." I thought he was absolutely excellent for the defense and maybe not too close to this case. And then for the prosecution, there were times that Creighton got into the weeds. I also think he's a bit too close to this case sometimes because he knew things that everybody else didn't know. And it felt like sometimes he would skip over stuff. And I'm like, "Wait, where are you going with this?" Because, and I've been in cases like that, especially with paper cases. There's so much information in your head, trying to backup to a jury that knows nothing about the case and lay the groundwork sometimes can be hard. You have to bring it all the way back to the beginning. And when you're dealing with so many cases that can be difficult. But he got real excited about the financial stuff. And at some points I was like, "Sir, they get the point. You can move on. Your jury is with you. You can move on." But I like the way the prosecution team worked together. I like the way they use their



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attorneys. It takes a very strong leader to bring in also younger attorneys and portion the work like that. The temptation for senior trial attorneys is to do it all themselves. It's a very, very difficult thing to allow your team to also handle things because attorneys are so used to being in control. We like to be in control of our cases. And we'd like to be in control of what's said, but they did a really good job of apportioning it across attorneys and I think some of the criticisms are regional differences. There were times that I thought that we saw Meadors being a little less formal with some of the witnesses. But I also think none of the witnesses seemed bothered at all. All of the witnesses when he came up and stood next to them and talk to them, some of the witnesses were like, "Ewww," some of the witnesses didn't seem bothered. But it seemed to be his practice. And again, he was watching the jury. I think he's a very smart attorney, he was watching the jury. And if the jury was bothered, I think he would have changed. If Judge Newman had said something, which he did a few times. He was like, "Go back to your seat, stand over there." Judge Newman let him know to not be maybe so informal, but he had a good trial presence. But there were things that I was like, "Oh, sir." I think for a national audience, how many guns were in the courtroom and how frequently they got pulled out, kind of shocked a national audience. They were like, "What is happening with all these weapons?" It was interesting to see the kind of national response.

Mandy Matney 31:19

Yeah, and let's talk about that, our favorite moment that you and I both were probably just utterly blown away, when Dick Harpootlian jokingly pulled out his gun, pulled out not his gun, pulled out a gun, that was



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being used as trial evidence and jokingly pointed it at the prosecution table.

Emily D. Baker 31:43

He laughed and said, “Ha, ha, ha, tempting,” while pointing a weapon at the prosecution table seemingly in the direction of Meadors. And those two seem to have a history together. I know they've done trials against each other. There were times when they were yelling at each other in the courtroom and Judge Newman's like, “Stop.” And even when the jury was out of the presence, Meadors the next day was like, “He pointed a gun at us yesterday, Your Honor.” And I was like, “Thank you for finally bringing it up. How did no one say anything?” I was absolutely stunned by that moment. And when I went back and watched it back, there was just a smile on Poot’s face, you could just see it being like, “Heh, heh, heh, heh.” It was just appalling to me that he thought that would be okay.

Mandy Matney 32:33

And what do you think that says of South Carolina's Bar Association and the fact that like, Dick Harpootlian, knew that he could do that. That's the only reason why he did. He knew that he could do it and get away with it and not face any consequences. Which he hasn't and he probably won't ever. How do you think that that would play out in a California courtroom, for instance?

Emily D. Baker 32:56

It's very rare that they allow you to handle weapons in the courtroom, they're not going to be just sitting on the floor. Law enforcement would



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have an absolute kitten over it, those are handled just by law enforcement and then put away. It's a different way of operating it. But he seemed very comfortable with the fact that that would be okay. And the fact that he wasn't going to get in trouble for that and that the prosecution wasn't really going to complain. And we didn't see the prosecution complain. The prosecution didn't say, "Your Honor, we need to approach at sidebar." They didn't make a big deal about it. So if everyone in the courtroom is not making a big deal about it, I was like, "Well, who am I to make a big deal out of it?" Maybe they all think it's funny. But this is going to shift as you get younger attorneys who might be like, "This is not how I think things are funny." And this is not I don't think like "Hahaha, that's amusing." This was in front of the jury. It could impact the jury. I thought it was a bigger problem than anyone else in the courtroom thought. Judge Newman is not going to just interject, the attorneys needed to and the prosecution chose not to. I don't know why. It might have happened so fast and so late in the trial that they were like, "What even just happened?" But it was stunning to me. But he clearly felt comfortable enough that that joke would be appropriate and could do that.

Mandy Matney 34:16

And it's like, what else have you done when cameras weren't in the courtroom? And what else do you feel like you could get away with? I think it was just insulting. And like you said it was...I don't even know what part of trial...



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Emily D. Baker 34:29

It was very much towards the end of trial. And there was another time where Meadors...Meadors also snapped at Harpootlian and Harpootlian like slammed his hands down on the table and stood up and was like, "Your honor that..." and made a huge deal about it. And I'm looking at the prosecution like, "See? You do anything he's gonna make a big deal out of it. But he points a weapon at you and you all just sit there and kind of giggle." So you can't let it go both ways because he made quite a show out of anything the prosecution did or said in a very theatrical way.

Mandy Matney 35:01

Right and that's ultimately not good for the jury for when you're trying to win over the jury. I feel like his antics over and over again...if I was sitting in the jury box would just be like, "Oh, this guy..." Like he was constantly overreacting. And he was constantly being extremely dramatic. And again, if he was a female attorney, I feel like people's reactions to him would not be, he's the greatest lawyer of all time.

Emily D. Baker 35:30

I think, well, I don't think the behavior would have been quite the same. He is clearly an attorney, that as juries are changing has not changed the way he does trial with the way that juries change. And jury pools shift and the things that are appropriate shift. And as attorneys get negative results, they start to go, "Oh, do I need to reevaluate how I do how I do things?" And I don't know if that will happen with Dick. I think he's probably not going to do that many more trials. He wasn't super present in this one, which also surprised me, how frequently he was out



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of the courtroom. There was...I don't know if he was coordinating witnesses, or what, but he was out of the courtroom quite substantially. And then when I looked at the motion that they filed in the Mallory Beach case about their attorney time and asking for hundreds of thousands of dollars of legal fees, and how many lawyers they had, they had quite a large amount of support in the courtroom. And then they had remote support as well. And I'm like, "He's not going to be calling witnesses and bringing them in. What is he doing when he's not in court?" Because he was out of the courtroom a lot. And I started clocking it going, "He's first chair, where is he? Why is he not there?" And there was a lot of trial that he wasn't there for.

Mandy Matney 36:45

And his clerk was there too and she was coughing a lot. And I was wondering if like they were getting sick, and I mean, Dick Harpootlian is in his 70's, and not in the best health in the world. And every lawyer will tell you that a trial that long is exhausting, physically, mentally. And I mean, I don't want to shame any lawyers in their 70's for practicing, but Dick...it just was so obvious over and over again, that like maybe your time has passed. Maybe this is too much for you. And I thought you made a really good point earlier with the prosecution and it was really great. They recognized that this was a marathon and that they needed their whole team in and that they were going to divide up everything. And I agree, I think that the way that they did that was really, really brilliant. And also, I would assume very hard to do because...



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Emily D. Baker 37:47

And it takes a strong leader to do that. And I imagine that the state AG's don't go to trial nearly as much as like a deputy district attorney. They normally do things via grand jury and then things plead and settle. They aren't going to trial with the frequency that other criminal attorneys are because they're not dealing with like high volume, misdemeanors and low level, you know, felonies that need to go to trial. So it is more of a rarity for them to go to trial in the first place. So then to divide it up that way amongst attorneys who might not have done a ton of trials takes a lot of confidence in your team. And I think we saw Creighton have a lot of confidence in his team.

Mandy Matney 38:26

Yeah, and that's...and again, the jury can feel that confidence, and instead of whatever was going on with Jim and Dick, and...just weird, weird vibes from them the entire time. And they kind of seemed like they were in chaos. Everything was just...didn't seem to be well planned, strategic, all of that. But one more question I have for you before we wrap up is, you mentioned before that you noticed during the Depp v. Heard trial that you saw a lot of troll activity, troll army, whatever a bot army is whatever you want to call it. And you said that you kind of noticed it in the Murdaugh trial. What do you see with this? And is this a thing that's happening with criminal cases?

Emily D. Baker 39:13

It's a thing I'm noticing. I don't think it's just criminal cases. I didn't see it as much in like the Gwyneth Paltrow case, for example. But in some of these high profile national attention cases, and we're even starting to



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see it in Utah with Kohberger...there are people who definitely take sides or take sides early and believe that everybody else has it wrong in some way and are hell bent on making that happen and tend to go after the people who talk about it and talk about the cases. Which is interesting to me, because you can't really go after like a Court TV, right? They're not going to go off air and even if you run one correspondence off, there's going to be another one that just pops up in their place. So it seems that the voices that get attacked are more of the independent voices because if you can shut down that one voice, it might shut down. You know and I think that with the internet, somebody will always spring up in their place. There are plenty of independent content creators, but the social media activity around these cases is intensifying in interesting ways. And we're starting to see it even in the pre-trial. What concerns me about it, aside from the internet harassment and kind of the digital harassment of content creators, of witnesses, of people involved in the cases, of judges getting letters, of the attorneys getting harassed and then the attorneys getting flooded with emails of information that's like, "Did you see that..." You know, there was a theory going around online that Amber Heard was like doing lines on the stand out of a tissue. And it was the most bizarre thing that just took off on social media. I'm sure the attorneys had people sending them clips of this being like, "No, see the way she's wiping her nose?" I'm like, "What is happening on the internet right now?" She is in a courtroom sitting next to a judge, either blowing her nose or wiping her nose or having a booger or whatever it is, but there's no way she's doing drugs on this on the stand. But those things kind of blow up quickly and flood everybody else in the middle of a trial and it creates a circumstance where we're seeing judges, particularly in Idaho,



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not want that happening in their courts. They don't want called-in bomb threats, which happened in Murdaugh and has happened in other cases I'm covering that are streamed, which I liken to a swatting. I don't think they're real bomb threats. I think they're swatting the way that streamers get swatted. And it's, it's wild to see. And this is why judges are like, "We don't want to deal with this in our courtroom." And I think it ultimately hurts access to justice and seeing what's happening inside our courtrooms because judges have very real concerns. And I can't tell them they're wrong. You have witnesses that aren't going to want to come testify in a high profile case if the internet is going to dig into their entire lives, pick them apart, like find their siblings and their parents and where they live and their jobs and harass them. There was substantial harassment of witnesses for both Johnny Depp and Amber Heard...ran some of them off of social media entirely. And it's going to hurt people going forward, if witnesses don't want to come forward and testify because they don't want to be harassed.

Mandy Matney 42:22

Real quick, what is the solution? Like do you think this is better or worse, having all these massive amounts of people watching these cases and very interested in digging into these cases? But on the flip side of that is all the online harassment that everybody involved faces? The spread of misinformation? Do you think that there's anything that could be done to find a balance between cutting it all off completely and being able to have a transparent courtroom where everybody can see it and interact?



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Emily D. Baker 42:56

I wish I had a solution, but it's something I do think about quite a lot, because it's happened in other older cases before the internet where you still had media in court detailing every witness that testified and there's still case law on witnesses that were harassed in person in small communities at their jobs before the time of the internet. So the internet makes it a little bit easier, but it's not particularly a new problem. I think there needs to be more conversation, hopefully, like the one that we're having about how this can impact justice. Ultimately, if witnesses won't participate in criminal cases, if witnesses won't come forward and say what they saw happen because they're afraid, it can really start to impact people. But I don't know if having it not online will change that. Because we've seen particularly in Idaho and the Kohberger case, the surviving roommates have never testified in open court. There's been motions filed, not identifying them by name, identifying them by initial, and the entire internet found them anyway because they were connected to the victims on social media. So even though that's been protected through the courts, it's still all out there. So I don't know what the solution is, other than to crack down on those doing the harassment. Because if they're held responsible, really held responsible, it might actually start to change things where people don't feel so safe being anonymous on a keyboard. Because honestly, no one's truly anonymous. It's just how long it takes you to find them.

Mandy Matney 44:31

Exactly. And that's one more thing that I would like to talk to you about. Do you think...one more question...



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Emily D. Baker 44:37

I love having a conversation.

Mandy Matney 44:41

This is obviously something that's been fresh on my mind recently and David and I have been talking about this a lot. Do you think that social media companies should be held responsible as well for especially, and we've talked about this a little bit, Reddit and the snark groups that like you said, and I've seen it too, I've never seen one talking about a man and constantly harassing and making fun of a man. Is there any...is there anything that could be done for the companies that make money off of these hate groups and do nothing to cut down on the harassment?

Emily D. Baker 45:18

We're in an interesting position in the US with our freedom of speech and the fact that freedom of speech is so broad. Short of defamation, you need to go after the individual who's doing the harassment, not the companies that are harboring essentially the harassment or facilitating it on their platform because of Section 230. And Section 230 allows things like YouTube really to exist because if YouTube got sued every time somebody didn't like my face, or what I said on the platform, YouTube would just go back to only vetting like traditional media or not existing at all. So there is really a push pull. What I would hope to see is companies making it easier for legitimate subpoenas to get after those that are using their platforms for targeted cyber harassment and then allowing the court system to go after the individuals that are facilitating that. And if that requires companies to have people's verified email



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addresses and more identifying information about them, even if they can have an anonymous username, but logging that in a way that if there is a valid court order it can be found. Would that make it easier to go after the people? Well, I think it might and if the platforms are protected, and the remedy for someone being subjected to targeted harassment is okay, well, you've got to go through the harassers, then the companies also need to provide that information so that you can go and Sue those who are harassing. However, even if you shut it down on Reddit, it will go to other sites like Discord and 4Chan and elsewhere. So it is kind of a whack-a-mole until you can get the courts to take action against the individuals. And that is not always cyber harassment is not always an easy thing to prosecute. But if we see more civil actions, it might become risky enough that many won't choose to engage in that behavior once they are unmasked.

Mandy Matney 47:21

Yeah, and I mean, I think you've made...you've raised a lot of good points there and if these companies did more to make it easier to go after and prosecute and hold these people accountable that are spreading all this hate and misinformation online I think that that could have a chilling effect. But also, if when you sign up for Reddit, if you have to say, if Reddit says, "Just to let you know, we can find bla bla bla." Because I do, I honestly think a lot of these people do this behind a fake name because they believe that they will never...that this is a pretend world where laws don't exist when they're behind a fake name and that they can't do real damage, but they can. And it's been a struggle for me too, as a huge advocate for freedom of speech. And as you said, I believe the rise of independent creators is really helping journalism and a lot of true



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crime. And I believe that there's a lot of good with the justice system that comes from that. But we've got to do...I feel like, especially with people, like purchasing bot armies that I've seen and all there's just a lot of fraudulent activity going on. And it's hurting real people. It feels like people are like, "Oh, I'm in the UK, so I cannot...and that makes it more complicated too if somebody from the UK can harass..."

Emily D. Baker 48:55

Even though the laws there are more strict. The bot thing, where it's not real people behind the account is a whole 'nother factor. Because at that point, you're following the money and who is benefiting off that? You know, are platforms that allow that type of non-verified, non-human behavior going on - what are the responsibilities there? And how will that change? This is something I talked about a lot with the growing of deep fakes of AI voice recreation, of Easy Video recreation. It's...the problem is going to get worse before it gets better. Because verifying what is truth is getting more difficult, especially for just the casual observer. It's getting harder to know what is...the fact that we saw this, during Depp v. Heard, the *LA Times* reported that Jason Momoa had testified. There were two TikTok compilations going around of Jason Momoa testifying, but he didn't actually testify in the trial and they retracted it fairly quickly. But even those vetting it through editorial boards got fooled by a meme on Tik Tok and reported it as fact. This is going to become more difficult. And if we can't have open conversations about it without fear that you're going to have one person controlling 30 accounts, making a big stink and then it being a problem, then what do you do? So it is a problem. I think there are



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some solutions for the problem. But I think holding the individuals who are doing it responsible has to be the beginning of that solution.

Mandy Matney 50:39

Yeah, absolutely. And I...like you said, I think more people just need to talk about it. And I think that we are facing a time where it's becoming...and it's harder on the journalists at the *LA Times* when they have a million...I would get really frustrated with all the rumors flying around constantly within these Reddit groups and Facebook groups and they were completely false, because you just have to stop your day and start calling sources to verify and it just makes everything increasingly difficult when it's hard to tell what the truth is. Emily, I know that I've taken up a lot of your time. And I really appreciate you. And thank you again for joining us.

Emily D. Baker 51:23

I appreciate you too.

Mandy Matney 51:24

This has been fantastic.

Emily D. Baker 51:25

It's been a great conversation. I'm sorry for all of the long answers.

Mandy Matney 51:28

I really appreciate it. Thank you to the premium members for joining us today and making this possible. And one thing Emily, can you do a shout out to my Uncle Dave, who is a fan of yours?



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Emily D. Baker 51:42

Absolutely. Uncle Dave, thank you for your support. I absolutely adore you.

Mandy Matney 51:47

Well, thank you, and take care of everyone. This was amazing. I really appreciate you joining us, Emily.

Mandy Matney 51:57

I am so proud of this conversation with Emily. We'll be right back for my interview with host of *Crime Analyst*, Laura Richards.

Mandy Matney 52:54

We are here with Laura Richards. And I'm really excited about this interview. I'm a big fan of Laura's. And first of all, I want to talk about your background. You are in police work, correct?

Laura Richards 52:30

That's right, although not as a warranted officer. So I spent 10 years at New Scotland Yard for my sins, I worked in their sexual offences section which was in their intelligence branch. So the first five years was about identifying serial rapists, serial killers, and those who abduct children and women. And after that period of time, more than five years, I then started profiling domestic violence perpetrators backwards, a reverse engineering process to see whether we can identify these dangerous men far earlier. And in particular, because our domestic homicide rate was high, I was looking at, can we identify warning signs, risk factors to try and prevent murders and what I call "murders in slow motion". So I



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ran after that the Homicide Prevention Unit where my team had reduced domestic violence murders by 58%, year on year, which was 33 people less dead each year. We use the same methodology because my boss, who was the head of homicide gave me another 14 portfolios to see whether I could do the same thing with these other areas. And yes, it was a huge amount of work working in a very different way in a culture that is very challenging, and has traditionally been very reactive and very secretive in the way that they do business. And there I was, with my background in forensic and legal psychology, asking difficult questions and trying to understand could we have intervened earlier? What questions should we have asked, what should we have done? And can we prevent cases from escalating to murder?

Mandy Matney 54:11

That's all very interesting. I have so many questions. But I'm wondering, first of all, what are some of your findings for what you call murder in slow motion and how to prevent that? What are some of the things that you found?

Laura Richards 54:24

Yeah, so one of the key things I kept being asked, you know, can we do this with serial killers, contract killers? And I said, "Well, let's start with what we know." And a lot of people do report domestic violence to the police. So I started with domestic violence and I found the coercive control, which is a term that's new in America, but coercive control correlates to femicide, and familicide assigned to children being killed. And now we know it correlates to suicide. So asking questions about, about coercive control, strangulation, so someone putting hands



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around the neck, particularly men to women, it increases the risk seven fold to femicide. And things like separation. When there's abuse and the victim tries to leave, it normally takes them seven times to successfully leave. But when trying to leave, that's when things normally intensify and escalate. And 76% of murders happen at the point where a woman says, "I'm leaving and I'm not coming back to you." And with that finality, that's when someone could become very vengeful. And if, "I can't have you, no one will," the sorts of things being said. So separation and escalation and sexual violence correlates to femicide. So I created a risk model from these risk factors and high risk factors being identified. And now it's within a toolkit called The Dash, which the police use so that they ask these questions every time someone discloses domestic violence, or stalking, because stalking is a high risk factor. Stalking and honor based abuse. So we are still continuing to try and intervene and prevent far earlier when someone discloses domestic violence.

Mandy Matney 56:13

That's very, very important work. How do you think that the patriarchy plays into police work? And how did you kind of fight that? I think that we kind of relate on just kind of being an odd woman out. And when you tell people that their way of thinking isn't necessarily wrong, but might need to change, I'm sure you were met with a lot of resistance. What did you find about how the patriarchy plays into police work and investigations?

Laura Richards 56:43

Yeah, so a lot of the time I was the odd person out in the room, asking difficult questions. And I think probably, you know, if I'd been asked this



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question 27-28 years ago, I probably wouldn't have seen the patriarchy and male entitlement and these things as being an issue. And it's something that I've learned across my career. That's what it all tends to boil down to. And it is a real challenge when you are spotlighting misogyny, and patriarchy when a lot of people aren't even alive to that being a thing in the old boys network, and how it operates, particularly in the policing culture. And when you're someone like me, who had a degree, who, as many of them said, I spoke like the Queen or Lady Penelope. I was always singled out as being the odd one out and not one of them. So you're always on the back end of briefings, you're always the last to know certain things, you know, regarding an operation, for example. So the misogyny inside the culture is the biggest challenge. First of all, when the male ego, I've just been talking on my other podcast, *Real Crime Profile* about male egos getting in the way of identifying serial perpetrators and serial killers, you know, and that's what went on with the Rex Heuermann case. And the male ego is a huge problem, along with that culture of patriarchy, power over, where men are motivated to have power over, which is really what domestic violence is all about that power over. So it comes up all the time in my work, and it's very hard to bring people along on the journey, because people wake up to it at different times, you know, in their life and in their career. But when you're in an all, predominantly all male environment and all male detectives when I first started and you're working sex crimes, it's a really tough environment to work in and try and collaborate with people when you're seeing things totally differently the majority of the time.



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Mandy Matney 58:49

With sex crimes, particularly I've been very interested in that recently. Have you happened to see the documentary, *Victim Suspect*?

Laura Richards 58:57

Yes. And I had the opportunity to speak to the director and to Rachel De Leon, the investigative reporter.

Mandy Matney 59:03

Oh, that's awesome. I'm behind on that. I just wanted to watch it for...it's been out for a few months now, but I knew it would make me really angry and get all these emotions going. And I finally was like, "I'm gonna need to watch it today." And it just kind of hit me like a ton of bricks while watching that. And not only that, that being a reporter covering sexual assault for so many years I feel like the majority of law enforcement do not understand how to investigate sexual assault. It's like their entire approach seems to be wrong and the risk that victims have to take by just reporting the crime that's been committed against them and it's unlike any other crime. When you report a robbery, you're never considered the suspect. It's just unbelievable. But what have you found with how kind of the patriarchy and these old systems of thought affect sexual assault investigations? And what's wrong with it?

Laura Richards 1:00:17

Yeah, so I mean, it's a huge subject and *Victim Suspects* is very well done. And I think Rachel de Leon and Nancy, they asked the right questions. And, you know, one of the things that I see coming up and have done consistently across my career is that women, when women



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report, they're not believed, just for the sake that they're women. They're not believed. And often times, if they're reporting to a male officer, you know, if that male officer hasn't experienced it for themselves, or had it happen to someone around them, they struggle with understanding what they're being told. And they struggle with memory not being 100%, certain things that we know when in trauma, that's what happens. And certain things like drugs or alcohol being used by the perpetrator or targeting a woman who is vulnerable because she has been drinking, because there are certain perpetrators who will target those women intentionally. And because they're vulnerable, but the fact that she can't remember everything a male officer might think, "Well, that's because it didn't happen," rather than they were targeted. And the fact they can't remember everything is actually indication that it happened - trauma. But they see it the other way round. And I think that's one of the biggest challenges, the not believing. Not taking seriously when women report things. And the lack of compassion and empathy is a huge problem as well. And I don't know if you can teach compassion and empathy. And you know, it's very much, we know more women are abused, and we know more men are the perpetrators. But there seems to be this, this move now to want to find more male victims and have more female perpetrators. That's playing into what's going on present day. But *Victims Suspect* was very much a case I believe, of officers coercing victims, bullying them and trying to get them to retract. And then under that by saying, "Well, this will go away if you just retract." Instead of them, just letting that be the end of it, they then arrest them, because they still want the clear up. And I believe that it relates to the Me Too Movement, the backlash post-Me Too. And there's a punishment factor. And so there's now you



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know, more cases where I'm seeing that women seem to be being punished as a consequence. And that is very insidious to me seeing that happening. And talking to Rachel and Nancy, and knowing that, you know, this is the tip of the iceberg of the cases being found, but women not being believed is a massive problem.

Mandy Matney 1:03:00

Yeah. And that was just devastating. Seeming those women that felt like they had no other choice but to plead guilty. And yet the system failed them entirely. And like you said, they're also dealing with very complex trauma at the time of all of this going on, and it just makes it so much worse. But yeah, though, that was the thing that kind of hit me, they were looking for things that should have been the opposite of what they were looking at, like, correct? It's like they're following this book that is completely wrong. When it comes to sexual assault, saying things like, "Well, you don't remember anything. So that means that must mean that you're lying." And, and I also just feel like you said, the male ego plays a role. In that case, I just noticed a lot of the police officers, unfortunately, could see themselves more in the perpetrator, and they wanted to protect the perpetrator more than the victim. And they could see themselves being falsely blamed. And they didn't want that to happen. And it was just wrong. I'm really, really scary for the future of sexual assault reporting. And I think my overall conclusion after watching that was the importance of having more women in law enforcement and having women who understand trauma and that can at least have compassion, like you said, empathy toward the victims. And something needs to change because the likeliness of someone even reporting a sexual assault is so low and the likeliness of them



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getting actually arrested and charged and prosecuted for a sexual assault is even lower. And now coupling that with this rise in women who are getting charged for reporting on rapes, which is just a horrible thing to say, I can't imagine what that does as far as the chilling factor. It's just horrible.

Laura Richards 1:05:09

Yes, and then they have to fight the system. And I think, you know, a lot of it is that the double standard, he can just say he didn't do it. But she has to prove way beyond that it happened, but he can just be taken at his word. And that's what we saw with, you know, some of that some of those cases where they didn't even interview the alleged perpetrator. They just took it, "Well, he didn't want to come in for an interview," But that was good enough for them. But yet, there they are, you know, grueling interview of her over hours and hours with no care for her and in a freezing room in trauma. And there's just a complete double standard. And actually, with the Gabby Petito case, that was one of the things that I saw on camera of the officers being manipulated by Brian Landry. And even within Utah's own 101 Domestic Violence guidelines in their, you know, 100-Page documented, best practice, it says, take care. The more like the officer is, the cop to the perpetrator, the harder it is for the cop to believe that the perpetrator did what she said he has done. Take care around this, you know, it was all spotlight. And if you just take the picture of Brian Landry and Officer Pratt, physically, they look alike as well. But he just did everything that he could to make Brian Landry the victim. And Gabby, and we see on camera and on *Crime Analyst* I took it apart in 23-episodes of literally each interaction and the bro code and what was going on with Officer Pratt changing the whole



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temperature of that police stop. And the young officer, Officer Robins taking his lead because he's the more senior officer. And it was the wrong lead to take even though Brian is clearly manipulating them. And by the end, they're fist pumping. These are the things with bro code that there must be accountability. And the way that you change that as you, yes, you have to have more women I believe in senior leadership positions, but you have to have accountability for when it's the same shoulder column numbers coming up, that there is a consequence to those wrong and neglectful and corrupt decisions being made. And in the Met, for example, my old police force at New Scotland Yard, there's just been a big, a huge review into them called the KC Review and it's...we're spotlighting all the things that I saw and called out within the police service and you know, only came to light again, because one of their own officers Wayne Couzens had abducted using his warrant card at the time of COVID, a young woman called Sarah Everard and he raped her and he killed her. And he had indecently exposed himself multiple times to other people prior to that. He was named, he wasn't spoken to. The police had his vehicle registration index, they never followed it up. And he got away with it. And he went on and escalated his behavior to abduct rape and murder. So that's, you might say, that's on the extreme end of it. But unfortunately, perpetrators are attracted to the police force because of the power and control. The patriarchy, the power they have over. So it shouldn't really come as any surprise. But yes, these are horror stories that do need to, you know, have sunlight put on them. And *Victim Suspect*, I think, did a very good job. And more often than not, you're seeing women being bullied and coerced. And the misogyny happening right before your very eyes. And those interviews were all



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caught, you know, on camera. And there was no basic investigation. They were making conclusions before even properly investigating, which again, is just unacceptable.

Mandy Matney 1:09:10

Yeah, I've seen that time and time again. And I'm curious if you've come across research on this or if you have kept track of anything like this, but I am seeing a big difference in how male men get treated at crime scenes who should be the main suspect like Alex Murdaugh. And I'm now working on another case called the Grant Solomon case I'll tell you about in a minute. But long story short, this father called 911 and he said that his son, his 18-year old son had been killed by his car, his truck rolled over on him. And 911 and everyone on scene kind of took him at his word and they never did an autopsy. They treated it as an accident, and really, as far as we know, didn't follow up to ensure that it wasn't an accident. Have you seen that come up a lot and the deference that they...that a lot of police officers give to men?

Laura Richards 1:10:13

Yes. And I'm nodding away, because that is the classic double standard, that he can just say it's X, Y, and Z, and it's believed, and it's not even corroborated. And yet she says, it's X, Y, and Z and she's instantly not believed and the opposite is true. Everything works against her from that point. And I think, you know, the Murdaugh case, is a case in point because we see it on the body camera footage, we see Murdaugh just walking around. Well, that's a crime scene that should have been secured immediately. And so should have he been secured, in a vehicle just like Gabby Petito was. Remember, she is immediately put in the



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back of the police van where a suspect would sit. Well, Murdaugh wasn't treated in that way, even though he later tried to claim that he was. Well, where would it be right to have the only sole survivor walking around the crime scene on the phone dictating what happens. You know, for me, that would be the stuff maybe of the 80's, the 90's, you know, going way back in time, but it's certainly not the stuff of 2021, 2022. His position, he's standing, you know, the officers saying, "Do you know who that is." all of that weighed in. So again, what it tells us is the value and the worth of a man who is seen as far more valuable and important than a woman who... take the victim suspect where they're treated abysmally, after a traumatic event and yet Murdaugh is treated completely differently. Not even as a suspect, even though we know that majority of domestic violence murders, it's the partner or the ex-partner, or you look at the person who found the bodies, or the person who made the 911 call where he was all of those things. And yet, there's blinders on it immediately.

Mandy Matney 1:12:11

Yeah, from all accounts, he should have been treated like the number one suspect. And I've also seen cases where people who are actually victims of these crimes...I saw one case where the children whose parents were murdered, the police even made sure that they...then they were like little teenagers, 13-14'ish, the police made them put plastic bags on their hands and sit in the car treated like they were suspects. You could tell on that scene with Alex Murdaugh a lot of the officers there felt bad for him. Like they felt like they could have been in his shoes. And they did not want to treat him like a suspect because they did not want to be the cop that treats a guy who just lost his wife and



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son, like a suspect. But uh, yeah, I mean, that was just...and we look, there's so many times women have especially...I've just been like, blown away by the things Alex Murdaugh has said and done. And just like, for instance, when he immediately started blaming the boat crash kids and you sit there and you're like, how could he even think that could possibly be? But then you see how men are treated on these crime scenes. And you see how they just a lot of times, say one thing, and oh, that's a fact. I'm just gonna go with that. And it's just unbelievable.

Laura Richards 1:13:47

It is. I mean, it's best practice, you have to secure the crime scene, right, depending where it is, whose best placed to come in and preserve it, but more so the people that are around it, because you never get that evidence back again. And anyone who's within that crime scene would want to be cleared of it. So, you know, they kept saying to Murdaugh, in the later interviews, particularly the August 11th interview, you know, right at the end, the 1:26 second interrogation right at the end, that he was still a suspect, because they couldn't clear him. And in fact, his DNA was...there was nothing to you know, they didn't do enough at the start. And Alex Murdaugh felt confident that he talked his way around it, because he's a talker, and because he's very powerful and influential. And I believe up until that point, where that last minute he's interrogated, he believed he was in control because he always had been in control and people just took him at his word, particularly the fact that he is a lawyer. And I think you know, Jeanne Seckinger really did underline that point. These are men who've sworn in at the bar, they have integrity, you believe them because, same with police officers, right? So it's that extra level of insulation that they get. And protection,



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they just say things and therefore for Murdaugh, he just couldn't believe that he was being seen as a suspect. He just thought the whole way that he had said enough and done enough, because previously, he would just be taken at his word. And I think that's true, actually, of most men, Mandy. They're not used to, you know, particularly men in authority being challenged themselves. And it's a real shock to them, where women are constantly having to explain ourselves. And, you know, being put on the defensive. Even as a professional, I have to have my CV out along my arm. Otherwise, you know, I get called a fraud and all sorts of things where my male colleagues never have that. But if that double standard happens across life, you know, and it gets magnified, I think, when we see on body worn camera footage, you know, and we can dissect and with crimes, it gets magnified further. And I guess I'm one of the few people who calls that out all the time. And it doesn't make you popular, but it has to be called out because otherwise, it's, in my view, it's women and children who pay the price. And why should Murdaugh escape any form of accountability, and he should have been looked at right from the start. And admittedly, I don't care who you are, if you are at the scene, in the scene, and if you're the person who called it in, and if you're the person saying you discovered the bodies, and you're the person who's touched them, your clothes should immediately be taken from you, your phone, everything. And that's for his own protection, too, as well as to be able to progress the investigation. But all the wrong things were done. And as a domestic violence scene, you know, that's what it should have been treated as, right from the start, irrespective of who he was.



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Mandy Matney 1:16:57

What did you think was some of the most compelling evidence against Alex Murdaugh?

Laura Richards 1:17:01

I mean, for me, because I'm a behavioral person, so the language on the 911, the things that were missing, were significant to me. But that's not actual evidence, it's just indicators to ask more questions. In terms of the actual physical evidence, where the video probably is one of the most powerful pieces of evidence, the video placing him at the kennel was just minutes before Paul and Maggie were killed. Namely, because the whole time he had maintained he was not there that he had napped, and went to his mother's and he hadn't seen them for, you know, over an hour. And he maintained that continuously. And that piece of video, where multiple people confirmed it was his voice. And just within minutes, both Paul and Maggie are shot dead. He had to explain that and the lies that came thereafter to explain it, you know, were again very, for me, compelling. The last person to be there. The fact Paul had no defensive wounds. When we look at the crime scene itself and how they were killed. The staging. For me, it was very clearly a staged crime scene, it would be very unlikely to have someone who was stalking them, who happened upon them, who managed to control that scene and commit that type of offense. And for him to have been in the house, never heard a thing. Everything he said made little sense. There were just these big omissions in his account and he never specified in the three interviews time, which it's omissions for me that I look for not just what he said. He omitted any form of timeframe of when he was doing things. And that was intentional, because he's a



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lawyer, and he knows that time is the thing that normally is problematic and catches people out. But the timeline itself for him, and I think, you know, when we talked before and in my episodes, I take the timeline apart the data, which shows not only was he there, mapping the 4,000 plus data points of his vehicle, and the acceleration at certain points and where Maggie's phone was thrown. Once you see that mapped against his steps, the 280 odd steps just after they were killed. You know, you start to piece together a very compelling narrative. And it's a narrative of phone calls, text messages, data, vehicle, data, the videos that tell a very different story that's far more reliable, because it's data and it doesn't change, from his narrative. And that, to me, was the overwhelming and compelling picture of the evidence that it just wasn't possible for it to be anybody else other than Alex Murdaugh.

Mandy Matney 1:19:46

Right. And that's where there was no reasonable doubt and I said that to people a lot then. One of the biggest things I think we definitely relate on, I learned throughout the investigation and it's simple, you just stopped to think about it. Well, I learned that Maggie and Paul both did not have rigid schedules that they come and go from different houses all the time. And that on top of who you said this in one of your episodes, who could have possibly have known that Maggie and Paul were at the kennels in this moment and had the balls to go on the Murdaugh property where there's all these guns? How could it be? And then again, that on top of the video, and on top of just all of the other evidence against Alex, it just got to the point of I cannot possibly see how this could be anybody else. And I think he's very...he's still pretty good at convincing people. Otherwise, I'm really interested in what you



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learned from analyzing Alex's behavior and language, both on the stand and from the night of the murders.

Laura Richards 1:21:01

Yes, well one of the things that I saw consistently is that he is very good at lying. And he's well practiced. And he can look you dead in the eye and take you on his journey. And you believe him wholeheartedly. And he's very good at making you feel special, and that you are the most important person. And he's very good at reading emotional temperatures of people. I think he's very, very clever in that respect of being able to gauge what people need and give them what they need and what they want, but also ensure that he gets what he wants. So when you hear Shelley Smith, we've talked about her before, but she didn't realize that when he offered to put in a good word with the principal at the school and offered to pay for her wedding, they were manipulators. Change the timeline and I'll help you out was what he was saying to her, but she read it as, "He's such a nice guy. He offered to do this for me." But her gut was telling her that there was something more at play, which is why she spoke to her brother. But she didn't really know outright she was being manipulated, but her gut was telling her something was off. And she felt conflicted because she liked him so much and thought he was a nice guy. That's how he scored most of his manipulations. Through his likability and through his charm, he could be a charming guy and very manipulative. So the art of the manipulation is, you don't know you're being manipulated. And he's a Grade A, you know, and class acted it. He's a lawyer, everything about his standing, the family and Murdaugh land elevates him. But his training as a lawyer, him just being able to say it and it becomes true.



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And everyone thinks he's this powerful and influential person. So they will rally and jump to whatever tune he wants to be played. So he's not used to people saying no to him. And I think that was what was apparent to me in the lead up to the murders, that he felt very much that people for the first time were challenging him and confronting him. And this was very new to him of Maggie not playing by his rules. Jeanne Seckinger not playing by his rules. He's suddenly got these significant women in his life, not, you know, dancing to the beat of the drum. And he's got questions being asked about money for the first time and people are chasing him down. He's got Mark Tinsley, the tiger who won't let go, who's saying, "I won't let go." And yeah, we can be friends, but I'm coming for you basically. He's got the grand jury. He's got so many things that he cannot control where he's used to being a man in control. And that's for me, his entitlement that his need to control things, the greater desire for him was that he had to control things. And most of this comes from Paul's behavior. And that's why things fell into place for him. The decision that you or I, a rational person just cannot square, you know, how could he kill his son? How could he kill his wife? While he just saw that as a means to an end. We are not clinical people like that. But someone like him is in terms of, you know, it's very Machiavellian. And, you know, the end justifies the means in terms of what you do and how you do it. And you know, the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. So, for him, taking the bullet for the team, he's eliminating a big problem. He thinks that the boat crash goes away, everything goes away, and he gets sympathy in this tragedy that he comes out okay. And it didn't work out that way. Because there were some people who just refused to back down.



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Mandy Matney 1:24:53

I think he became very sloppy and I've seen this with other people and criminals, similar to Alex, where they're so used to everybody not checking them and not questioning them that you kind of like...he did absurd things. Like this whole staging a suicide for hire incident on the side of the road. That's an absurd thing that 90% of people would never even remotely consider, because they would say nobody would believe me, that's crazy. But I feel like he believed until the very end that he could convince the jury and he could convince anybody of his innocence. And I think that's why he took the stand.

Laura Richards 1:25:40

Yes, I think his arrogance of believing that his tool of choice is his voice, his personal power. Being able to persuade people to his way of thinking and that has worked for him all his life. Him getting sloppy and a lot of people say, "Wow, he would have committed that murder in a much more of a considered way." I think what people don't understand is, if you haven't done it multiple times before, you don't know every facet of what's going to unfold. You just don't know until you do it. It's like anything, if you decide to go skiing for the first time, you can imagine it but you've not tried it so you can't plan for every eventuality. And although I believe Murdaugh did try and plan for most things on June the 7th, there were lots of things that he couldn't control. And time was one of them. The police arriving and what he would do afterwards, and the clean up and so on. But I think with September the 4th, in his mind, I felt that from the August 11th interview, he had to show them that he was not a suspect. That those individuals were still out there, the Maggie and Paul killers and therefore staging that



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homicide was a way of showing that he was the target. Because there was a lot of murmurings locally about how fearful everyone else was and he just didn't seem to be. And I think he picked up on a lot of that. And also what happened, you know, in the August 11th interview, where you just couldn't believe he was a suspect. He had to change that. And therefore I don't believe it was about him ending his own life so Buster could get the money. I mean, this is a egocentric, you know, very narcissistic individual. He wouldn't do anything for anybody else. And we saw that. That's why he killed his family, to protect him and protect the Murdaugh name. So I think it was his way of trying to claw back sympathy with the public with the media turning on him slightly and get back in control of things. You know, being able to say that he was a victim too. That they came after him. It wasn't well thought through, but under pressure people don't think things through. Even with the calmest of minds when things are spiraling out of control and you've never been in that out of control situation which he never had, he had to come up with something under a time pressure as things were slipping away from his grasp of control. He knew about, I believe the grand jury, and his bank records. And obviously the boat crash case that he was going to have to produce his records, all these things had a time date stamp to them, as well. And that ticking clock is something that was invisible to you or I. But for him, he was in this pressure cooker situation. And so it wasn't the smartest and well thought out act at all. And I think what followed next even with saying that he was a drug user, all of that was about the sympathy and empathy play that he felt he could garner that and perhaps people would start to come back to support him. And he just had to say the right things and do the right things and say it was the drugs. And that's another classic of when



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someone says they've got an addiction, it's the addiction that's the problem. It's not me and my behavior. And if I fix the addiction, the problem has gone away, but I'm not culpable for it. So it's just another way of divorcing yourself from your bad behavior. And that's as old as time that I've seen men do that.

Mandy Matney 1:29:25

Yeah, I never really thought that. And the other thing that was just clicking in my mind again, every time I go back to reviewing the facts of the case and like this is so absurd that this...at the time during the during the trial, there was just a lot of media saying that he might get off that he you never know blah, blah blah and that there wasn't enough evidence against him. And then you kind of tear it apart in the way that you have and another big lightbulb moment for me was just okay, so if it's somebody besides Alex, how are all of these other things going on in his life and creating the superstorm around Alex Murdaugh. Those would all have to be a coincidence. Including the Jeanne Seckinger major confrontation on that morning. When you peel it back and think about it like, "How could he have been caught by his company on the same day his wife and son were found murdered?" Something's very off there, but yet it took police a year to press charges against him, which was a lot because I mean. Back to the behavior analysis, do you think that Alex is a narcissist? Would you classify him as a narcissist?

Laura Richards 1:30:54

Well, having not directly assessed him but indirectly looked at his behavior through other people and through watching footage, etcetera,



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I believe that there are a lot of traits of psychopathy. And he should be assessed for psychopathy. And more so the things that were missing for me was the lack of love and care for Maggie and for Paul in the aftermath, and no real thought for them. It was all heavily processed, driven scripting, of relaying things to the police on interview and all this fake crying. But the lack of any form of real emotion. You know psychopaths are very chameleon'esk. They're very good at being able to read people's emotional temperatures and also fake emotion and a lot of that kind of hyperventilating etc, with no tears, but almost looking at the officer to see you know, in the car, "Are you buying this?" There were lots of those moments for me. The superficial charm...there are 20 traits of psychopathy, and the psychopathy checklist PCL-R was developed by someone called Dr. Robert Hare. And there are 20 traits and you score someone on those 20 traits at the more extreme of those traits, they score two points. So the maximum out of that are 40 points and he scores quite high. From things like superficial charm, pathological liar, you know, he lied and lied and lied again, and he has no problem with changing and reversing. Doing a full 360 and still telling you 100% that it's this and he doesn't see anything wrong with that, that he believes at 100%. He can rewrite the narrative, his manipulation, his lack of remorse and guilt, you know, about any of it. Not once does he tell those officers, again talking about what was some of the things that were omissions, not once does he tell those officers, "I have a drug habit," or, "I have financial problems." And it could be related to...it was all centered on Paul and Paul's behavior, which is really the leakage because it was about Paul. He was telling the truth, that it was about Paul, but his shallow, shallow effect in terms of his emotion. They're all just very, you know, superficial reactionary emotions, to get people to do what he



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wants them to do. His failure to accept responsibility, his impulsivity. You know, I think some of the things we were seeing towards the end was impulsivity. In terms of the decisions that he took, which you can't quite square in your own mind, because they sound bonkers, but he does it anyway. And, you know, I think probably looking back across his life course people would say that of him at different times in his life. You know, that he would be the unpredictable one, I think was what Mark Tinsley said in terms of cases, that suddenly he would do something out of left field. So, you know, I think that there would probably be a history of, you know, prone to boredom and certain things in terms of his personality type. The traits of psychopathy, you know, we often don't think about psychopaths being in white collar jobs, but they are. And there are numerous papers written by colleagues called psychopaths in suits, you know, the individuals who are the lawyers, the police officers, the judges, they're in these present high powered positions. And they love nothing more than making themselves look really busy creating a lot of frenetic you know, they can be exciting to be around, but they just use people as pawns and it's all about getting power over them. Dominate or be dominated and everything is about having their needs met. And that's what I see for Alex Murdaugh. Everything was on a very superficial level. Even his relationship with Maggie. He couldn't actually say one nice thing about her personality and about why he loved her. It was all about what she did for him and the family. And the same with Paul, to throw your son under the bus who's just been murdered. And the first thing you say to the officer on the scene is it relates to the boat crash. It's because of what he did. That takes us a certain someone to do that, to throw his son under the bus at every opportunity, but to preserve himself at every opportunity.



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Mandy Matney 1:35:20

Is it common for killers like Alex Murdaugh to kind of tell on themselves? Like you said he definitely dropped clues that seemed like complete accidents throughout his interviews, saying things like, "It's because of you, it's because of Paul, it's because of the boat crash," and kind of giving, not saying that he did it, but offering clues. Have you seen that before?

Laura Richards 1:35:53

What he's really trying to do is to take them down a certain line of investigation, and he is framing it for them. And bear in mind, he's not used to being challenged. So just what he says is taken as read as verbatim, that's what it is. And you see the officer just say, "Okay, well, that's what it is." And he's relying on that. And I believe he's just relying on everything that has happened for him in the past, that he just says, "This is what it's about, this is what happened," and that would be accepted. And that served him very well in the past. So what I understand about perpetrators and studying psychopaths, and killers is they do what works. And if it ain't broke, they don't fix it. They don't need to change it. And that's why this was frustrating for him because everything that he did, he believed he had done enough to influence them. You know, each interview was just in a car. I've never seen that before. They're sat in a car interviewing who really is the prime suspect. And they're just letting him sit in the car and you know, spit out whatever he wants to out the door and drink what he wants and take a phone call and it's all very low key, Murdaugh's really in control. He's got his lawyer, different lawyer with him each time that's intentional, so that no one person is joining these things up. And he thinks he's smarter



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than Owens. And, you know, for all intents and purposes, you've got Laura, the detective Laura Rutland sat in the back, she was pretty switched on to the fact that he didn't have blood on him. There were certain things that were amiss that should have happened, but didn't. But he felt he had done enough. But that last 1:26 seconds was when it all fell apart and his disbelief, because it's just never happened before I believe, where he's just not being believed or accepted. So we might think that it's leakage, but it is just his style of manipulating, I think of framing things and it's this, I'm a lawyer. I'm, you know, Alex Murdaugh. I am le grande fromage, the big cheese. You know, what I say goes.

Mandy Matney 1:37:58

So with Maggie and Alex, there wasn't that documentation of domestic violence before the murders. And some people took that as proof that he didn't do it. They think that a man starts hitting his wife before he kills, like you said, choking, abusing her in different ways. What have you found in your research and your experience as far as men who can escalate from never, mental abuse, yes, but never physical abuse to all of a sudden killing their wife. Has that happened before that you know of, besides Alex Murdaugh?

Laura Richards 1:38:43

It's more common with family annihilators and he fits that profile. But what I will say is even with the family annihilators, you see coercive control, i.e. they're used to controlling everyone in their environment. And then normally there is a change, something happens and there's a tipping point. But coercive control is about a power imbalance. And if you think about Maggie and Alex, she toed the line up until sort of the



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latter months when there were financial problems, but she...her friends attested to the fact that Maggie would just go along with everything. She was quiet. She, you know, was just sort of the linchpin of the family but she didn't create waves and she didn't really have a voice. Well, what changed was her challenging him and her asking questions about the finances and drugs being found. And her realizing that with the boat crash that everything was at stake, and she was now asking questions. Did she see a divorce lawyer? Some say that she did. Did she get a forensic accountant? Some say that she did, you know *Daily Beast* sourcing and others sourcing. I believe there was a change in the relationship going from what some of the workers or PMPED said about what used to happen, that she used to go there and they had lunch together and so on and that all stopped and she was at Edisto doing up the house. There seems to be a change in the relationship. And she was certainly worried about money. So I would always expect to see coercive control in these situations, a man who's entitled, who says how it's going to be and everyone plays by his rules. And that's the invisible part of coercive control, the power imbalance, the domination of one. And yes, it's upsetting and it's distressing at the point you start challenging it and saying, "No, I'm not going to sign that contract." And, "No, I'm not going to do that." That caused problems with Alex Murdaugh because he wanted to remortgage properties, and they were in her name and she refused to sign the documents. So that was telling me that there's a change that she's now not toeing the line anymore. And at the time, where he knows everything's at stake, Maggie's become a problem, because she's not playing by his rules, and Paul's a problem and continues to be a problem with law enforcement. So as I always say, when people think about domestic violence, they tend to think about



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physical abuse, and we need to stop thinking about solely physical abuse, it can go hand-in-hand with coercive control, ie, when the other tactics don't work to keep someone control, then you threaten the physical, the hand might be raised, or there's a gesture, or maybe there's a rape, to reinforce. But that's why we should always be asking about control related behaviors and entitlement male entitlement and male privilege, which is invisible to us, Mandy, we're on the flip end of it. But men have that power, they have that power over just because they're a bloke. And they have that male privilege, because they're a bloke, and particularly if you're a white male, and Maggie had to toe the line and just fit in with the Murdaugh name. There was a power imbalance when they got together because they were from very different families as well. And people don't think about that. But when someone gets together with someone who's older and you're younger, there's a power imbalance, particularly if someone's well established, wealthy, influential, and you're not from that background or that family and you're marrying into money, there's a power imbalance there. So again, there's a lot to think about in terms of the dynamics of a relationship to understand what was going on prior. And I always look at, you know, at least six months to a year to get a baseline of the relationship and understand how they first met, what was going on in the relationship had something changed. And you have to really dig into it. But I believe that a lot had changed in this situation, in this case with Murdaugh.

Mandy Matney 1:42:35

And I know that I've taken up a lot of your time so...and I have a billion more questions, but I'll ask this one. What do you have to recommend



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or suggest to women out there who might have friends who are in controlling, abusive, psychologically abusive relationships, but not physically abusive? And women who are listening thinking, “Hmm, that reminds me a lot of Alex Murdaugh's tendencies to control and manipulate. That reminds me of my friend's husband.” What advice do you have for people dealing with that? And how can they get out of...is there a way for them to leave relationships like that safely?

Laura Richards 1:43:29

Yeah. So I mean, my advice would be to research coercive control, and they can go on my Laura Richards website, or the DASH Risk Checklist website and listen to my episodes on *Crime Analyst* because I talk about it a lot in different cases. And then once you see it, you can't unsee it. And that's the thing with the power imbalance. And a lot of women write to me and say, “My goodness, you just changed the whole way I see the world and how I understood my childhood, my relationship with my partner. And I realize now the misogyny and the coercive control, that has always felt wrong, but I never knew there was a name for it. I never knew how to describe it, or that, you know, it wasn't a problem before because I was quite happy. I had a child and I was, you know, doing the homemaker part. But now I want to go back to work and he won't let me.” Or certain things, you're being micromanaged and regulated. You know, if somebody's willing to change and you feel it's safe to bring it up to that person, because there are some men who just, they were brought up in the patriarchy, that's just the way that they behave. They don't realize that it's a problem. So if you feel that you have a relationship where you can bring it up to that person, you can try and explain to them how certain behaviors make



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you feel. If you don't feel safe i.e. there's a fear of consequence that, if you don't do what that person wants you to do and you don't feel safe, well, that sounds like a very risky and dangerous situation to be in. If you don't feel safe, because relationships should feel safe and that you're trusted, you're respected and you're treated with dignity and equality and allowed to reach your potential. So if you are with somebody like that, then I would absolutely research coercive control and think about leaving. But leaving is a process and it takes a long time. That's why it takes someone on average seven times to successfully leave, a woman to leave a male abuser. You have to plan it and think it through and ensure you've got support and help from people to do so. I'm not a person who says just grab your things and flee because that's not going to be successful. And it's probably going to be more risky given that there may be stalking that happens thereafter. So make sure you get good advice from an expert, a specialist, there are plenty of domestic violence support workers in the US, the UK, Australia, look at researching coercive control. Listen to someone like Dr. Judith Herman, who's got a 1992 book for trauma and recovery. She talks about coercive control and trauma and recovery and it's very eye opening and healing, I think for a lot of victims and survivors. But, you know, if you have children, it becomes more complicated, because you have to think about them, and obviously contact down the line. So it's not just a simple fix. You know, you come alive to these things at different times when you hear people talking about it. And, you know, I often say if you've got a friend, for example, who's with a coercive controller and you're worried about them, encourage them to listen to a *Crime Analyst* or watch *Dirty John* or, you know, listen to a podcast where they talk about it so that it opens up her mind and possibility, you know that this



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is happening to her so that she starts to realize in her own time and space. Because the worst thing you can start to do is dictate to her what she should do, just like he does. So you want to be supportive and make somebody feel like you are going to be there for them. And you want to help them understand what's going on, but also help them exit safely. And it's their choice to take that action because you want that person to have their own autonomy and to plan it in the best way to keep them and their children safe. And I say that because coercive control does correlate with femicide and with familicide with children being killed and with suicide where women end their own lives because they feel so hopeless and helpless.

Mandy Matney 1:47:31

Yeah and you always hear the words, "Why didn't she leave?" Which is victim blaming.

Laura Richards 1:47:39

Which I can't stand. It is the worst question you can ask any woman. And if you flip it on its head, why does he do what he does? Then you start to ask the right question of the right person.

Mandy Matney 1:47:50

Right, and I think that that has a lot to do with the patriarchy dominating a lot of our ways of thinking that are just toxic and incorrect. And just not reflective of the reality in the situation. Because like you said, a lot of times, leaving is very, very dangerous. A lot of times it increases the danger in these women, in their children's lives. But you



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have to do it strategically. And you have to really, really want to do it. You can't force anybody to do it.

Laura Richards 1:48:23

No, it is very much a process and they have to be ready and why I talk in a gendered way is because we know from the statistics, it is women who are victimized disproportionately by men. That's not to say men can't be victims because they can but in terms of coercive control, and in terms of the murders, it's women and children who are murdered by men, and that is symptomatic of the patriarchy power over. And yet the irony is Mandy, people talk about the woman scorned, you know, and that women are emotional, but yet it's men who cannot control their emotions and cannot control themselves. And they believe that the way of, you know, resolving something is to kill a woman. So the problem is with men, and it takes men to fix it. And that's what I say, as somebody who has been working in this space for 27 years. You know, women can't change this. It's for the good men to stand up and hold the other men to account.

Mandy Matney 1:49:19

Yeah, absolutely. People say all the time, she's emotional, dramatic, whatever, but it's really just talking about your feelings in a healthy way when they're saying things. And the opposite of that is violence. Men use violence when they don't know what to do with their feelings and when their emotions are out of control. And you're absolutely right. Male emotions statistically are far more dangerous than women talking about their emotions and you're right too. We need men to step up and help change all of these problematic ways of thinking. Laura, thank you



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so much for your time. I really, really appreciate it. And where can people follow you and find more information about all of this amazing work that you do?

Laura Richards 1:50:08

Yes, thank you, Mandy. It's a pleasure talking with you. And yes, I mentioned *Crime Analysts* podcast, but there's also a YouTube as well, where people can watch me do, you know, shorter videos explaining cases. And also the website, thelaurarichards.com, it's just changed to and the dashriskchecklist.com. That's where the risk assessment and questions that you can ask and go through on your own to understand whether somebody is being abusive to you, because it's not always clear. And Paladin National Stalking Advocacy services in the UK. So if someone's listening, and they're suffering and being subjected to stalking, there's an advocacy service there that I founded, having changed the law on stalking. So yes, they're the main ones. And obviously, on social media, I'm @thecrimeanalyst on Twitter and Instagram @crimeanalyst and @laurarichards99. So I put a lot of information out there because I want to help as many people as possible. And that's the power of podcasting as well. And you know, the YouTube because it's very intimate when people are hearing you. And I can't tell you how many hundreds of women have contacted me to say, I said something and it made them think about x and some who say I helped save their life or get them out of a situation. And I always say, "No, you did that." Because I'm all about empowering women to be empowered to step into their power, and giving them the right information to help them on that journey.



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Mandy Matney 1:51:39

Absolutely. And I am too. I have a feeling this will not be the last time we talk.

Laura Richards 1:51:44

I hope not. I've enjoyed it very much. You know, again, for me, thank you so much for your work. You've asked incredible questions. And for *Crime Analyst* I've been listening a lot to your episodes and absorbing the questions that you ask and the answers and then analyzing, you know, the behavior. And I think it's, well for me, I admire greatly the work that you've done, because you did it with breaking news as well, which is not easy. And you know, for four years, it's not easy to be in one case. And that's all you're thinking about living, eating, breathing. And I know because I'm there a lot of the time. But thank you so much for everything you've done. And a lot of people have said to me, they've listened to your podcast, you know, after *Crime Analysts* and they feel like good companion podcasts. And they're very complimentary. So I'm, I'm very proud when people say that because, you know, I tell everybody to listen to your podcast on the subject of the Murdaugh murders.

Mandy Matney 1:52:41

Yeah, I think they're very complimentary of each other. And I think we have a lot of similar like-minded fans and I'm excited for this crossover. But thank you again for joining us. I really appreciate it. Thank you again for joining us and I'm sure we will hear from you again.



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Laura Richards 1:52:58

Thank you, Mandy.

Mandy Matney 1:53:01

We were so grateful to Laura for her time and insight. Please check out Laura and Emily's content too, because each of them have an awesome interview with yours truly. I am so honored to have this opportunity to share their insight. Again, as we gear up for new cases and returned to some old ones, your support of Luna Shark Premium is the best way to help us expose the truth wherever it leads, give voice to victims and get the story straight. Stay tuned. We are just getting started. Cup of Justice is a Luna Shark production created by me, Mandy Matney and co-hosted by journalist Liz Farrell and attorney Eric Bland. Learn more about our mission and membership at lunasharkmedia.com.

Interruptions provided by Luna and Joe Pesky.