



## EPISODE 81: Special Guest Court TV's Julie Grant Talks Victims-First Journalism and What She'd Change About the Justice System

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**Mandy Matney** 00:10

Oh my gosh, it has been an emotionally exhausting few days. As you all know we are diving deep into the Mica Miller story and I cannot wait for a True Sunlight episode on Thursday. As horrific and dark the details are in this case and they just keep getting darker, I will say that it has been encouraging to see the reporting on JP Miller continue even after his lawyer sent a strange cease and desist letter to the media. The Mica Miller story deserves sunlight and we're thankful for those allies in the media continuing to cover it. And speaking of allies in the media, I am so excited to share that on today's show we have a very special guest, Julie Grant from Court TV's *Opening Statements*. Julie is a journalist and a lawyer and a trial court expert. Above all, she is an advocate for victims. I really admire Julie's work because of how she chooses to keep the victims' perspectives and their stories at the forefront of highly publicized national cases. Too often these cases are looked at as entertainment or fodder for analysis and the victims get lost in the fray. Julie is someone who makes sure that does not happen. Liz and Eric sat down to talk with Julie about her career and what brought her to Court TV her thoughts on Alex Murdaugh, believe me she sees him for exactly who he is, her ideas for a better justice system and the idea of vicarious trauma and why it is so important to as she calls it get on the couch. Julie is a big advocate of therapy for everyone, not just lawyers and journalists and she was also the perfect guest for us to have during mental health awareness month because that is such an important message. Premium Members will get an additional segment when Julie introduces her new French bulldog puppy to Liz and Eric. Julie recently lost her beloved dog Reina and was lucky to be able to get Reina's grandpup. So pups up to Julie. Let's get into it.

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**Eric Bland** 02:22

Cups up! Okay, what is everybody drinking this morning? I got some Zevia Zero Sugar Orange. What do you have, Liz?

**Liz Farrell** 02:30

Oh, my usual Polar seltzer, grapefruit.

**Eric Bland** 02:33

All right, Julie, what do you have?

**Julie Grant** 02:35

I've got water with electrolyte powder in it. Got my electrolytes and just trying to hydrate more.

**Eric Bland** 02:41

You have to because what? Do you wake up at like five o'clock in the morning and start getting your day ready and getting prepared for your show?

**Julie Grant** 02:49

Exactly. Then I've got to negate all the coffee I've had with more water.

**Eric Bland** 02:54

Everybody welcome! Premium Members, Cup of Justice listeners. This is a big day for us. We have television host Julie Grant, a former trial lawyer. She is the host of *Opening Statements* which appears Monday through Friday, 8am to 9am on Court TV. I have been on her show a number of times and I can safely say that she is the warmest host that I have ever appeared in front of. She just makes you feel very



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comfortable, or questions or inviting and certainly her disposition is perfect. So with that said, Liz, we need to welcome Julie Grant on our show.

**Liz Farrell** 03:34

I'm so happy to meet you, Julie. This is the first time we're talking and I just love you. The things that you say are basically things that we've been saying. So it's really nice to see somebody who isn't afraid to give their analysis of a case without sort of maybe it's more through the lens of a victim I would say which we'll talk about. But I wanted you to tell people more about Opening Statements, which became a show in September of last year, I believe. So just let's hear about it. Let's hear what you do and what you're trying to achieve with it and everything.

**Julie Grant** 04:10

Gosh, I love you too. Thank you for this warm welcome. First of all, thank you for having me on Cup of Justice. Your podcast is awesome. And Liz, I'm so happy to connect with you too, because I feel like I know you but we haven't gotten to meet yet. And I'm sure we're gonna be best friends before this is all done. And Eric, you know how much I adore you. And we're not supposed to have favorites for guests. But, you know, we quit when some guests are more of our favorites than others. And you're at the top of that list.

**Eric Bland** 04:38

We're gonna get into your bio deep in about 15 minutes, but tell us about *Opening Statements*.



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### **Julie Grant** 04:44

Thank you. So this has been a brand new creation for Court TV and it's been so cool to be a part of it and create the show from the ground up. So the idea when we launched the network and you both know my friend Vinnie Politan. Vinnie was a face on the original Court TV. I adore him. I've, you know, I was a college student watching him and I remember just how fantastic he was. And it's really great to work alongside him now. And we're, we're friends in life, not just on the air. But um, the idea was, Okay, we're gonna launch Court TV live. And then we're going to have this nighttime show that's really a show. And you know, it doesn't have live broadcasting. It's not like calling a ballgame. It's more presenting different segments and ideas and analysis. And so it worked. So well, the network was saying, hey, we need that in the morning before the court day gets started. And I have done mornings before and just kind of have that personality where, you know, I kind of wake up early and like to sort of get the show on the road. And so the network said, Hey, we think you have the energy for this. Are you interested, we would love to do kind of like the pregame show, because video is the postgame show, which is great, you know, and this, but we really need that pregame, because people at home were actually writing in and saying can't wait till 9 am for the court days. So the network's said let's test it out. We did. Created *Opening Statements*, and I got to have a lot of editorial input in it in terms of how we want the show to go. So alongside you know, my senior producer Eric Golson, who I adore, he's tremendous. He and I sat down, we fleshed out some segment ideas. My friend, Matt Johnson, was really instrumental. You guys know him from the Murdaugh trial. He's fantastic. And we came up with some different concepts and pitched them to our head of network, Ethan Nelson, the brightest guy in television and the most



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hardworking guy on TV, let me tell you, and he said, I love it. Let's go see how it does. And so it's a time where I get to be a voice for victims. And Liz, thank you for saying that. Because that's something that's really important to me and Ethan, my boss knows that. And so really, through the show, I've gotten to kind of go back in the courtroom in a way and do some advocacy journalism. And so I open it up with an opening statement. And then I bring on the best illegal minds in the country like Eric Bland, and I have him come on, and I pick his brain about all sorts of cases. And we have guests from all around law enforcement, psychology podcasters, we have various people, which I love the different voices and the different areas of expertise come together. And and we're loose, you know, it's I say, it's like coffee and coffee, you know, we get warmed up. It's not as formal as Court TV Live, where we're a bit more serious. And we're a bit more focused on calling the ballgame the play by play, and the color commentary, so to speak with the explanations and, and the observations. So that's pretty much the show. Yeah, it's my baby, my baby.

### **Eric Bland** 07:36

Do you like it when you're covering three or four trials at once? Or do you like to just focus on one or two? Because some days you just do one some days? You cover a lot of territory.

### **Julie Grant** 07:49

That's true, Eric. That's a great question. I guess I would say, I like one only because it's impossible to watch them all live. And I always feel like when I'm watching back, I'm going to miss something or not catch something. And just how there are distractions in life and only so many hours in the day. It's tough. So I like when we're all in on a really juicy



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riveting case. And we can just dive deep and stick with that because sometimes the other risk when you're covering multiple stories, and even on *Opening Statements*, you've seen it Eric. When we go block by block, we might have eight different cases before the show's over. Right? Sometimes my brain like I feel like I'm scrambled eggs upstairs. And I'm like, oh, did I get these dates? Right? Did I get the names? You know, I want to make sure I pay everyone proper attention and give proper acknowledgement to every victim. And sometimes that's hard to do.

**Eric Bland** 08:40

When you have so many cases do you coordinate with Vinnie on the cases you both are going to cover so that you're covering the same ones? Or do you cover maybe something that he doesn't cover?

**Julie Grant** 08:50

That's another really good question, too. So we are independently operating and we have totally different producers. But we're all friends, we all talk and so what the producers will do with *Opening Statements*, we'll send out our show plan. And so Vinnie sees it during the day. And so they'll know, ah this is what *Opening Statements* hit on. Maybe we want to expound upon this. Maybe we want to not do this segment because it would be redundant. And then we see there's as well when they send it out at night and we leave each other notes or producers leave show notes. And sometimes they'll say, you know, we wake up to it. Hey, you know, we didn't get this portion of video in our show. If you want to use it, it's there. Or sometimes, you know, we'll share guest contact information. Just so because we realize not everybody is going to be ablated up early.



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**Eric Bland** 09:37

Are you in the same city as Vinnie? You're in, you're in Georgia? In Atlanta?

**Julie Grant** 09:43

Yep.

**Liz Farrell** 09:44

During the Alex Murdaugh trial you had, I shouldn't say during the trial was actually during his sentencing, I believe but most recent sentencing, you had this wonderful line and I think it might be my favorite of all the reporters who are covering Alex Murdaugh, but it was "Even his lies tell lies," which I thought was such a beautiful way to put that.

**Eric Bland** 10:07

It's an LL Cool J line. LL Cool J lies about the lies he's lying about almost.

**Liz Farrell** 10:15

Oh my gosh, Eric, I never know with your like your fountain of knowledge is so huge. So I was wondering just as a lawyer and as a journalist like, and I know the answer already to this is that you've never seen a case quite like Alex Murdaugh's but and then we can talk about any angle there, you know, the whether it's the murders, the financial crimes, the fact that he too was a lawyer, but as far as defendants doing the most to get out of their conviction, have you ever seen anything like that in your career?



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### **Julie Grant** 10:45

Oh, oh, that is such a great question. Well, I was gonna say Justin Smollett. So yeah, I guess there are some who are just relentless, and they will go to their grave. I didn't do it. And, you know, I mean, gosh, Bill Cosby, Harvey Weinstein, look what happened with him, right. So some of them are, sadly, listen, Eric, some of them are just so relentless.

### **Eric Bland** 11:14

It takes a lawyer that's getting paid a lot of money. Julie and Liz, if you have a client that's well heeled, they will pay that lawyer to do anything. Have you ever had those kinds of trials? Julie? When Yes, so when you were a prosecutor that you were getting no cooperation from the defense and they were forcing you?

### **Julie Grant** 11:35

Yes, I sure have. And it's maddening. You know, it's maddening. And when there's something that doesn't create a tribal issue, you know, for instance, like let's say it's a case, you know, maybe about dope, but the question is whether the defendant had the dope on him or not, whether the coke is in fact, coke, coke, right, you know, so most good defenses, you say, I'm gonna stipulate to the fact that it's cocaine, leave your lead person at home, don't waste the county's tax dollars, tax dollars. And then you have some of these defense attorneys who just know it's going to be a real pain for you to have that lab person on standby. They've got a stack of cases taller than them they've got to get through in the day. It's not the best use of their time, but they just want to make you work. I know, Eric, I've been there. Yes. A few of them are coming to mind right now as we're talking.





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### **Eric Bland** 12:27

Tell me about how you migrated from this incredible trial attorney to a law professor to being on TV. I mean, obviously, you have a TV face. You're gorgeous. You're well spoken. How did you...was this your dream? Was your dream to be a lawyer? What was your background that they had this coming?

### **Julie Grant** 12:51

Checks in the mail, Eric. So a lot of people don't realize this about me. So my background was both in journalism and law. And so it's kind of funny, I had a weird stage in life. I mean, don't we all right, growing up, it's hard being a teenager, and I was always a good kid. But when I got to my senior year of high school, there's so much pressure on kids, I feel like to know what you want to do what you want to major in. And I always had this interest in law. But I was I was really good at writing. I was always a really strong writer. And you was, I guess, somewhat with you to presenting and things like that. And I thought to myself, Well, when I go to college, maybe I can do both. And I remember my mother saying, I really think you'd be good in communications. You want to think about this. And okay, so I'll try it. And then. So I did the journalism major legal studies minor, and I was a core TV watcher. Back in the day, I was always kind of mature, like, as a kid, honest to God. When I was in high school, I was like, watching CNN, when I got home, I was always just a news consumer, which is...

### **Eric Bland** 13:51

I've been a news junkie my whole life.



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### **Julie Grant** 13:54

Oh, see, I'm not alone. I'm in good company. And so I just kind of I remember talking to my college professor, and I said, I feel like I just really like both. And I don't know how to do both. And I remember him saying, Well, you could go work for Court TV one day, if you do both. And I was like, wow, that would be so cool. You don't of course, I didn't think I would be good enough or smart enough or pass my classes. And so it was kind of like a pipe dream. And then I I began working in journalism in my hometown. And so that was my first job. Working in TV news. I did a morning show reported for...

### **Eric Bland** 14:27

Give us your hometown.

### **Julie Grant** 14:31

Yes, Steubenville, Ohio! Where Dean Martin's from Eric and Liz. If you've ever heard of Steubenville. Yeah, Dean Martin's hometown, so Steubenville's, favorite son. Small market and I worked there and really enjoyed it and I was on kind of the crime cops court beat. In addition to the morning show, I would go and report every day at noon and I really liked it and it was watching those attorneys at trial. Sort of reignited my interest. It was always like at some point in life I want to go back to school. I really just wanted to be a smarter journalist and journalism is really competitive and in television news, you know, sadly, women will have shorter careers than than men do. You know, and I've have colleagues who've experienced it and, and it's, it's a business that's it's tough to break into. And it's tough to get people to give you a chance. I mean, I had a hard time even just getting someone to take a chance on



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me. And you have to trust me enough to be a good storyteller and responsible, accurate ethical journalist.

### **Eric Bland** 15:32

He said the same thing when we interviewed him, he said the exact same thing.

### **Julie Grant** 15:37

It really is getting that first job, you know, and so that was tough. It was I had, I mean, I worked like as I had a temporary spot for a while I worked in a bureau, I commuted every day for about 45 minutes to and from work to, you know, to make peanuts, you know, because I really wanted to do this work and to storytel and to dig into things and, and so I thought, boy, watching these lawyers makes me think I should go to law school now, while I'm young, while I have the energy. And so I did three years in journalism. And then I say, I'm gonna go to law school before I get too tired. And so I left my job. And I remember my mother being like, Oh, are you sure you want to do this? And she's so sweet. My parents are so sweet. You guys would love them. They're incredibly supportive and everything and, and she's good. You worked so hard, because she knew like the tears and the rejection, I had so much rejection. And she's going, Are you sure you want to leave this after you're in the door? And I said, Mom, I really do. You know, and then I went up to my dad separately. I said, Hey, Dad, you know, what do you think? What do you know? And he goes, Jewel. I think we need a Tom Hagen in the family. Go for Godfather reference. We're Italian. So yeah, be the family could care. And so he said, Go, you know, we'll do whatever we can to help you out. And so you know, and they did, and I did, and I did it in two and a half years. I went straight through the



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summers, because I wanted to get back into journalism. And that was really just the plan, but then I fell in love with trial advocacy. And really, you guys that was really the only thing I was good at in law school. It was very hard, you know, and I saw grades that I never saw before. I'm like, what is this I studied so hard, and I'm making C's.

### **Eric Bland** 17:22

Yeah I had a contract professor who, you know, I finished in the top 10 of my class, but it would have been a lot higher, except I had a contract professor who gave basically everybody a C or a C+ two people got B's and one A and he said, there are so many good C lawyers in this country. I don't see many B's, and certainly few A's. And so he felt like a C and a C+ is a good grade, but it just kills your grade point average, you know.

### **Julie Grant** 17:50

That first semester is the worst. That's where you see all the C's, you go to law school, you're like, Oh, I'm gonna make it straight A's, because that's like, Oh, my, you know, my dad said to me at the time, George W. Bush was president at the time, and I remember like crying thinking, Oh, my gosh, I did so poorly. My dad goes, honey, our president made C's. He did really well. You know, it made C's, you know, you're gonna be fine. Just get through. And they recruited me for the drought team. And then it was funny did moot court? Yes. Yes. So I did. Yeah, the trial team. Exactly. So we had trial team and Moot Court and the moot court focus more on the appellate issues. The Trial Team was all the trial work. So I did that.



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**Liz Farrell** 18:32

And explain what Moot Court is for people?

**Julie Grant** 18:36

Oh, sure. That's a great question. So um, it's practice for attorneys who want to do appeals work, and so on appeal, it's a very different argument style than it is in trial. And so you're going before judges and usually a panel, typically about three, and they do what's called the moot use. So as you come prepared to present your argument, they interrupt you constantly with question after question and kind of divert you. And it's really like a mental challenge to just stay on track and get your arguments out. And you're arguing why the trial court was either right or why the trial court erred. And trial team, which is where you get the problem, the facts, and you take the case to trial before a mock jury, and you try it. And, you know, the jury renders the verdict. And so you work with the team.

**Eric Bland** 19:22

It is pressure packed, it's like being on a game show and you have, like 10 seconds to answer the buzzer goes off. Well, what they have is a green light, yellow light and a red light, you have 15 minutes to make your argument. And with about two minutes to go, your green turns to yellow and then red. You got to stop. You have to stop that very rarely do they let you continue on and what ends up happening is you have this refined argument, let's say of 10 minutes in your head and you figure they're gonna ask you questions to derail you maybe four minutes. And so you feel like you're gonna get your whole argument in when you walk. Get in there while you open your mouth and a question comes, and they keep peppering, you peppering you. And you're never getting



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to what you planned on saying, and you're trying to cram it all in in the last two minutes. And you may have a rebuttal time, but it is extremely nerve racking because in in trial court, there is no time limit. If you want to make an argument, you, the judge will let you make the argument until he cuts you off and says, Look, I understand what you saying. I've read it. I've heard it. But there's nothing like the pressure of an appellate court argument, then can you imagine in the Supreme Court, where you have nine people, usually, because Thomas doesn't ask questions, but eight justices are going to ask you questions, and it's the pressure. I think trial work is tiring, but not as pressure practice appellate work. What do you think?

### **Julie Grant** 20:48

Really? I'll say this, I've never had any interest in doing appellate work, either. If I haven't done it, of course, in classes, I had to do the Moot Court arguments and all that. But trial team, it is your tremendous pressure as well. And then try it is, it's, um, it's the long game, right? Because when you're in trial, I mean, you're not sleeping for, you know, days.

### **Eric Bland** 21:10

You're talking criminal. See, from a civil standpoint, different, you know, if I'm going up on appeal, I've lost money, I can't, I gotta make money as a plaintiff's lawyer in civil court. But as a prosecutor, you want to get that conviction. And then if you get the conviction, Fine, let the defendant appeal. Most likely, it's not going to be overturned, unless there was, you know, a mistake on character evidence or something that was done, but I find trials, you know, work out hard. So for me, it's, you know, not as tiring as it could be, but it's the payoff for what we do,



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you know, it is the payoff, but fewer and fewer cases go to trial. Now, you know, they sat or, you know, or they're, you know, disposed of, in other ways. So, tell us about you finish law, you finish law school, and then you become a prosecutor.

### **Julie Grant** 22:02

Yeah. So they recruited me for the trial team, I loved it. It was an incredible experience, and a lot of, you know, pressure. And that was really just something I kind of fell in love with. I didn't plan to do it. But they were like, Oh, this girl was a broadcaster, she's probably going to be good. And it took a long time to get good. Yeah, it was a real process growing. And the team won the national civil trial competition, when I was on it. And so that was to do that. And so I was like, wow, this is neat. And then I thought, Oh, maybe I want to practice. You know, this. That was like, That moment when, you know, in my trial team coach was like, you know, you really have a skill here, you this is hard to do, and you're doing so well. Maybe you want to think about practicing. And so I thought, Well, I think public service is such a noble thing to do. I admire those prosecutors. I watched when I was a journalist. I'm gonna go and I'm gonna serve. And so I applied to be a prosecutor in Pittsburgh, because that was Pittsburgh pas de Niro. Yes. Eric Allegheny County. Exactly. That's where I was an ADA, I applied there, because that was close to stupid Ville, Ohio, where I grew up, and the district attorney there who's still in office, he is one of the brightest and nicest people I've ever met. And I was fortunate enough to get a job there. And most people go in for a short time, you know, because they're looking to really get that heavy trial experience, as you guys know, very early on, you're, it's fast paced, and you learn to try a case with precision quickly. And I loved it. I loved it so much. I stayed for four years. And I felt like I



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could have stayed for the rest. I wish I had another lifetime like to, you know, you should have more time on this earth. But I knew oh, gosh, I've been out of the journalism business for I was going on eight years, it was about seven and a half years. And I thought I really need to get back in before I'm so far out that no one will allow me back end.

**Eric Bland** 23:55

So before you get to that we have to break to a commercial. So we will be right back. Now, didn't you ever want to take those skills that you learned as a prosecutor and become that defense lawyer that they would pay you huge money to represent them in the murder case or the drug conspiracy case or something like that?

**Julie Grant** 24:23

Yes, Eric. I feel like if I had more time, I would love to do that. And I would love to go be a judge. I really would. I hope when I retire I'd love to be a magistrate judge that's my goal. I want to you know set bond.

**Eric Bland** 24:39

Get to the dirty stuff.

**Julie Grant** 24:42

Yeah, you know, just because I feel like it's exactly it's the down and dirty, you know, restraining orders. Yeah. And because you need people you know, who really get it how, where the safety concerns are, how dangerous somebody is and knowing what to look for. I think I'd be good at that.





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**Eric Bland** 25:00

So do I. Do you think you could be good at a judge and sit there and watch bad lawyering and not take over the courtroom and say, Look, you really need to ask the question this way, or have put this piece of evidence in First show me where it came from, and then build on that. And that's the foundation. I couldn't do it. I couldn't do it.

**Julie Grant** 25:19

Right, you know, I'm sure you'd be a great judge. No, no, no. When I was early on in my career, you know, there were some really great judges who, you know, would see what maybe what I was doing, or what I was trying to, and sometimes they would offer just a gentle, you know, a nudge of, you know, hey, after the trial, I liked what you did there. But next time, do you ever think about doing it this way? And they sometimes they would offer a little bit, you know, and they were much older, much wiser. And so, yeah, I could see myself kind of maybe doing that, you know, after the case is over.

**Eric Bland** 25:50

How did you get into teaching trial ad, you got your LLM, for example, which is Philadelphia, my hometown.

**Julie Grant** 25:56

Oh that's right. That's right. Love your hometown, Eric. And yeah, so when I had gotten back into television, I thought, I don't want to stay out of law in I know that, like, I just love trial advocacy, so much. And I want to be able to teach it, you know, on a part time basis, or when I retire, you know, teach it part time, or maybe even full time. Who knows. But I thought to myself, well, now would be a good time to go



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back and get that because I've been out of the courtroom for a few years. So I did three years in North Carolina working as a journalist and then took a job in Pittsburgh working as a journalist, and then I commuted to Temple doing their LLM program, which is a hybrid.

**Eric Bland** 26:34

Explain LLM. Explain that because you get your JD, explain what an LLM means.

**Julie Grant** 26:40

Yes. So it stands for Master of Laws. So it's not a master's degree that one would get after their bachelor's this is you have to have a JD first. In order to get it in. Essentially, you're mastering a particular area of law. So I'm not a master in all laws. Like I said, I didn't do so well in towards my first year. You know, I never took family law. But trial advocacy. Yes. So technically, technically, you'd call me a trial expert, we had to master the rules of evidence. We had to try various cases under certain constraints and be graded by some of the best in the best. And so that program would enlist experts from all around the country to come in teach in it. And it was very competitive temples LLM. Because you have lawyers who are really good, wanting to be even better competing against each other to get this degree. And so I again, I said, this was the only thing I was good at. I graduated with honors from my LLM program. And then they invited me back to teach in the following year at Temple, which was super cool. To come back. I wish I could still do it. Maybe we'll see and Court TV keeps me pretty busy. But then I was lucky enough to get the call that Court TV was coming back.



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**Eric Bland** 27:54

Now hold that. How did you get from mainstream journalism? To that? Did you know? Because to me, you have that personality, that you could be running the today's show, you could just at breakfast, you know, on all subjects. You could show us how to cook, you could do a serious subject on politics, and then bring in Bruce Springsteen, how did you get from mainstream journalism to say, you know what, I'm going to just focus on the law.

**Julie Grant** 28:20

Yeah and thank you for that. You're so generous with the compliment. Thank you so much. That means so much to me, because it's it's hard to be diverse is a journalist, especially it's hard to do morning shows, where you do go from something serious to something that's light hearted, and it's really enjoyable when you can and I did do that when I was in North Carolina. And some I did a lot when I was in Pittsburgh, a little bit of that. And I kept saying to myself in Pittsburgh, I was the station's legal editor, and they would let me cover the big trials all the time, any legal story, I was the reporter who would get the assignment. And I kept saying to myself, you know, I really think this is where I need to sink my teeth. And so my agent knew that I had this interest in doing legal journalism work. And he said, I'm keeping my eyes and ears open for you, you know, had set me up with some different meetings. And so I was just kind of keeping my eyes and ears open to what may be happening. And then he just called one day and said, Guess what, cord TV is coming back. I'm going You're kidding me. You've got to pitch me. He said I already did. You're gonna have a phone call with the executives tomorrow. Just standby. And so I was like, Oh my gosh, like this is the best news ever. And the phone call went really well. And they



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said, Let's fly you to Atlanta to do an audition. So they flew me to Atlanta, had another in person interview and then was fortunate enough to get the job. So then I left Pittsburgh and Katie Kay worked in Pittsburgh. They're tremendous. They were so supportive. They knew I loved legal journalism, and they were so great with helping me you know, transition to Court TV and do the move.

**Eric Bland** 29:54

It must have been hard to leave your parents and your family and friends in your whole life. Community up north.

**Julie Grant** 30:01

Yeah it is. And they're also awesome. And, you know, I guess the best thing about, about having, when you have a family that supportive and you're really close with, you know, you can always come home, you're gonna constantly be in touch. And now with, with everything available, they can watch every show, you know, and text me, you know, during the show if there's, God forbid, an emergency or, you know, you feel so connected and fly home all the time, and they love having different places to come visit me and you know, they, they've always been so supportive, like, hey, you know, we know you can't do your dream job here. And so we love that you're there. And we're so happy. And so it's nice to be back. And it's nice to have stability here.

**Eric Bland** 30:42

Have you always been in studio? Or did you travel around? Both?



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### **Julie Grant** 30:46

So I was a street reporter as well. So in my first job, yes, I had that hybrid where I anchored the morning show, and then I was out on the street doing the noon show. So I've done everything from covering flooding, to homicide cases, to contentious civil cases, to investigative reporting done at all, I've had people very mad at me, because of some of the investigations I've done. You know, I've I've been there I've I've I'm not someone who just has had somebody hand me a script and save, we read this. And you know, and especially now Eric knows it's the show is largely just ad libbed, and it's, it's what you know, we're going to converse about, we have a premise, we have an idea. But yes, so have I like to get my hands dirty.

### **Liz Farrell** 31:27

I'm super curious, because obviously being objective is one of the core foundations of being a journalist. But Mandy and I have always been of the opinion together that there is no such thing there. You choose a lens with which to look at or the lens chooses you with which to look at certain situations, stories, what have you. So how did it come was Court TV call with you coming on board and saying like, I am choosing this lens, I'm going to always approach things from the eye of victims and their families and looking at the justice system, understanding the way they may be viewing or what what might be being done to them as the case progresses.

### **Julie Grant** 32:06

Right? I love that question. And so the answer is, yes. So they told me when I knew I was going to get the show *Opening Statements*. And I had a really important conversation with my boss, Ethan, who I think



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the world of and he said, You know, I want you to be you and speak with, I always I'm big on saying this. And he knows I say it all the time, you have to speak with your authentic voice. And it's taken me a lot of years to get comfortable enough to speak with my authentic voice. And he said now's your chance, you know, I want you to you know, deliver your opinions. People are tuning in to hear your opinions. This is kind of like, you know, we, Eric Goldson. And I, my senior producer, I talk all the time how he knows I love advocacy, and I get to do advocacy journalism, where I have done the neutral journalism where you are just strictly reporting the who, what, when, where, why, how, and you leave it at that, and there's no commentary. And you know, and we need that to absolutely, we need that. And there's, I think, an important distinction that consumers need to be aware of that, you know, you may be looking for just just the facts, or you may be coming to a particular show, because you are looking for that insight. And, you know, for me, it's always been really important to speak about things that are hard to talk about to try to breach those subjects that people shy away from, like domestic violence, like child abuse, and to to use the platform to say I want to give these victims and the survivors a voice here and make people look at the case through their lens. As you've said, Liz, I love that, you know, we all have our lens in which video we like how he says that he always says I was a prosecutor, the lens in which I see the world and and it's true. You know, we all do see things not as they are my belief. The Chinese proverb says as we are we see things as we are and so you're right, you know, I was a prosecutor and I loved being a champion for victims. And it doesn't mean I always wanted a conviction. No, I just wanted to do what was right. I had many cases that I tossed out and withdrew because I was not this wasn't a crime this person should make sure to share. You know, I've had battles



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with police officers over things I you know, I was certainly it's funny, feisty, you know, and didn't ever want to do what was wrong because it's such a noble profession where your only job is to do what's right, you know, and you're representing the Commonwealth of the state and justice so yeah, do justice. And justice is, is doing what's right to me. It's doing what's right. And so, yes, Court TV has been very supportive. And the whole design of the show is to put me in the position to advocate for something. So I do an opening statement, and I do take a position and I you know, and I certainly am always respectful to other viewpoints. I think it's great when we can have spirited discussions and people disagree. But I definitely don't shy away from just being honest in a call. Didn't like I see it? Yeah, so that's pretty cool.

**Liz Farrell** 35:02

I feel like there's been sort of I don't know if it's backlash or if people sort of just have like a lower opinion of advocacy journalism, because we've gotten accused of that when people are trying to insult us. They will call us advocacy journalists. And it's like, what is to be I don't understand why that's the insult in looking at all the cases that you've covered or even prosecuted. If you are granted sort of the magical ability to change one thing about just how the justice system works. What if you're looking at like the patterns of, of things that happen in cases what what do you think you would choose to change? Like, whether it's for victims or for defendants or what have you?

**Julie Grant** 35:38

Oh yes. If I could wave a magic wand, I definitely can tell you what it is it would be to limit the amount of case post postponements that can happen so that victims aren't re victimized and inconvenienced,



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because, and you know, seeing Eric nodding, I know he doesn't I'm getting it. When I was a prosecutor so many times, listen, Eric, I would have all my victims ready to go. I was ready to take the case to trial. And I would have the defense lawyer come in and say you have everybody here. I should do Let's go, you know, we go into the jury room. Are we picking are we what are we doing? And then it would be Oh, I'm going to put in a postponement just to make the victim have to go back home now. They had to take off work, you know, so So they're using their vacation time, they probably had to, you know, pay some money to park downtown and maybe pay their babysitter, whatever else you had to do. So they're being financially victimized, emotionally victimized, again, and again, because of nonsense postponements. So I would say unless there's a legitimate reason, I guess my wish would be for courts to better vet those types of postponements to say, Ah, you're not just going to throw in a postponement because you want to hope that people get so frustrated from showing up again and again and again that one day they just say, No, I'm done.

### **Eric Bland** 37:00

Yeah, here in South Carolina. We have solicitors control the docket, not the judges. So it's a different thing. Solicitors control the docket, and they say this case is going to be heard this term this week. And the judge can't do anything about it. Yeah, it's a different animal.

### **Liz Farrell** 37:17

Yes and no though, Eric, because right before I got on with you guys, I broke some news that the Michael Colucci re-trial, which was originally tried in 2018. In fact, it was the first case that the new Court TV aired. That case has been postponed. It was due to go to retrial on Monday.





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And the reason for the postponement is different from I mean, it's been postponed several times over the course of six years, largely because of COVID. Also, because of the defense attorney's health, just several times, but this time, the victims were very sure that it was going to happen on Monday. And here we find out it's not. And the reason is because they didn't book enough time for the case, which was foreseeable, preventable, what have you, but one of the victims outside victims, but the daughter of the victim, Sara Lynn's daughter is getting married in June. And it's sad for me because it's like, I was hoping so much that she would have some sort of resolution, her mom was killed nine years ago. So you're going into adulthood going into this new life with her new husband, just with this sort of thing off of her back. And that's just not going to be the case. And it's so funny that you say that today because of all days. But you're so right that that is one of the hardest things to watch a victim because that's what's uncaring emotionally right now, it's just the sort of, you know, it's it's good for perhaps the trial, because now they'll have more time to build a better case, I would say, but you just see the effect that it has on on people that are connected with the case. And I just, you know, you just hang your head, because sometimes you just don't know what to do. And I know as a journalist, I shouldn't be concerned with that, but...

### **Julie Grant** 38:59

I know, but you're such a good person. Yes. No, on a human level totally. No, I can tell you, you're empathizing with them. Listen, that's awesome. You're right, because it's a total inconvenience. It's a slap in the face to Sara's daughter, and she's been victimized enough. And now they may even lose witnesses. I mean, because people plan their lives. I always say it's like herding cats trying to get your witnesses lined up for a trial, and



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then now they're going back another month, reissue all those subpoenas. That's a really a crying shame.

### **Eric Bland** 39:29

It's difficult with a criminal case too because the defense will say I'm going to put on a defense for a week or two weeks and what ends up happening is they don't because they do such a good job on cross examination. They essentially try their case. On the cross examination of the government's case, when it gets time for their case, it may be one witness or it may be none. They may not put up a defense but in a civil context. You have to put up a defense that would be the defendant, the expert witnesses. As you know, it's a rarity. You know, we saw Alex Murdaugh testify, and certainly am Greg Leon's case, which was a murder that took place in our state. He testified, but that's such a rarity. But in criminal cases, they say six weeks and a mayor and only turn out the three. But I guess Andy is really going to put them through the paces. Andy Savage.

### **Julie Grant** 40:21

Hello. I remember. Ty was around his neck trying to question me. Oh my gosh, yeah, he makes some big moments.

### **Eric Bland** 40:30

He's a very good lawyer.

### **Liz Farrell** 40:32

Why don't we take a quick commercial break? And we'll talk more about that when we come back.



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**Eric Bland** 40:50

Have you seen some really good lawyers doing what you do? And what is your most interesting case that you've covered? And hopefully you're gonna say Murdaugh but you don't have to.

**Julie Grant** 41:01

Oh right. I know. You two are the Alex Murdaugh case experts. That's for sure. And I guess if I would say the most interesting case I covered at Court TV, I'll tell you which one it would be. It would be Kellen Winslow, the second.

**Eric Bland** 41:17

That crazy rapist. Do you know this, Liz?

**Liz Farrell** 41:20

I don't I don't know this case at all.

**Eric Bland** 41:24

Oh my God, his father was one of the greatest tight ends ever in history. The NFL and his son was a tight end as well. Very successful. Very rare. Do you see you know, the son be as good as the father and he had a real career going on with a family. But this Jekyll and Hyde personality and I'll turn it over to Julie. It was just nuts.

**Julie Grant** 41:45

Oh yeah. I mean, he this guy was at the perfect life when you look at someone. So he is athletic. He is good looking. He's got a gorgeous wife. Gorgeous, gorgeous, beautiful home. You know, and like Eric said, you know, he grew up with an exciting life with his dad, you know, being a



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Hall of Famer. And then he was able to step up and be a tremendous college athlete. He did 10 years in the NFL. So that's Erica, you know, a long time, you know, for someone to have that longevity in the NFL was a monster, and so that he's living his life in retirement in beautiful San Diego. And police uncovered that he was living this double life where he was preying on some of the most vulnerable women in our society. Women who were resorting to sex work, because of their runaways, addiction issues, exactly. Homelessness, whatever they had going on, they were engaging in prostitution, and he was sexually assaulting these women. And these women were in this position, like who's going to believe me that Kellen Winslow, the second this handsome athlete with all this money and this gorgeous wife and this fancy lifestyle is actually like creeping around the streets like picking up prostitutes to sexually assaulting elderly ladies.

**Eric Bland** 43:07

72 year old lady when he was 38 years old.

**Julie Grant** 43:12

It was that was one of the most it was mind blowing cases I've ever covered. That when it Court TV, for sure. Takes the case to this day. And I'm like, it's funny. I'm the only one at Court TV that still hung up on that I'm still like so sickened by it and I could not understand it. And then I would say the other one in person that I covered was Bill Cosby's first trial. Yes, Eric Exactly. Yeah. Where you grew up. Beautiful courthouse and, and that was nuts. Because, you know, kid growing up watching The Cosby Show. I remember what I said to my mother as a kid, Mommy, I want to be a lawyer when I grow up in, but I don't know any lady lawyers. And she said, Oh, well, you don't think Mrs. Huxtable is a



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lawyer sweetheart. She do I watch The Cosby Show. Claire Huxtable, you know Felicia Rashad. My mom said that was a good one. That was a good parenting. That was quick how she came with that. But you know, he comes in and they pick the jury in Allegheny County, the courthouse I used to work in because they had a change of veneer. So they brought the Allegheny County jury to montgomery county to hear the case. And so I got to cover it from start to finish and it was so nauseating. I mean, hearing what he did I mean, and he is cold as ice he would not look at the victims. He would he I remember this one moment where he walks out of the courthouse you guys and there were tons of people there like fans of his there were factions the fans who were like devout, I love Bill Cosby. He didn't do this people. And then there were all the accusers who were all banding together and saying this is a monster. He's been a predator for years. He's wrecked our lives. We want to see him convicted and he comes out and you hear the cheers and the cheers. And he does the Fat Albert. Hey, her like, it's funny. Isn't that sickening? I remember thinking like what a piece of garbage this guy, like we all looked up to and we all thought was such a great guy. And I mean, what a sickening predator. And and now he doesn't even have the conviction because of missteps by the prosecutors, as you guys know.

**Liz Farrell** 45:21

So he spoke at my graduation so I have like, yeah, I have shaken that man's hand. And I was so excited about it. I thought it was just the greatest thing I remember his message to all of us was to pay your debts to not get in over your head financially. But I look back on that and just like I can't, like you said, like, you have these fond memories. The Cosby Show was a show I used to successfully argue to have my



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bedtime extended when I was a kid, because I wanted to watch it so bad. Yeah. So it's just yeah, it's heartbreaking to see that but actually.

**Eric Bland** 45:57

I begged her to she's a brilliant writer, and her vocabulary is insane.

**Liz Farrell** 46:03

Thank you. When you were talking, I was like, Oh my gosh, she's like, I kind of had the same train of thought that you did. It was like get into journalism, and then maybe go back to law school and I just never never did it. Yeah. Oh, yeah.

**Eric Bland** 46:16

The common thread that you guys are talking about is this Jekyll and Hyde personality of most of these really out there defendants. They have a public persona, and then there's some screw loose, that they're doing things like this. Kellen Winslow was going out in the middle of the night. You know, Alex Murdaugh, Bill Cosby, you know, he was so mainstream and but the rage you're right, that they're all just multiple personality type people.

**Liz Farrell** 46:47

The rage these men must have.

**Julie Grant** 46:49

They sure are. They are dangerous people, all three of them incredibly dangerous and preying upon, you know, certain types of women, you know, in the cases of Cosby and Winslow, you know, Murdaugh, I mean,



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I just I think preying on anybody he could I think he just he didn't care who he didn't have to.

**Eric Bland** 47:09

He was only preying on the people at the worst times of their life, a loved one lost, you know, an urn or they had, you know, catastrophic injuries. He caught them at their most vulnerable time.

**Julie Grant** 47:21

He sure did, you know, in victimizing his law partners. I mean, just winning. What a horrible person. I mean, he's just like, oh, I think the guy is soulless. I really do.

**Eric Bland** 47:31

We agree, keep going, keep going.

**Julie Grant** 47:34

I know I Oh, my gosh, there's just some people you don't want to go near them. I'm sure you guys had that ick factor. Like you're in that courtroom and you just see the evilness.

**Eric Bland** 47:44

But I am dying to interview him. If I have one thing left on my bucket list. You know, I got a hold on one a week and a half ago. So that was one of my bucket list. But I really would love to have deposed Alex Murdaugh. Now we're gonna get to depose Russell Laffitte, one of the bankers, but it would have been my dream come true to just sit down and really get inside this guy's grill.



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**Liz Farrell** 48:06

You know I don't think that he is. He's exhausting. He's, I mean, I've never seen anything like that before. Creighton Waters held his own, but I don't know, Eric, he seems like somebody who is just some people are just pure evil.

**Eric Bland** 48:21

Yeah. But when he's up against somebody that he doesn't like, he'll want to show he'll say things he'll he'll trip over himself to say things that he really wants to say, you know, he's not smart enough and reserved enough to keep it in.

**Julie Grant** 48:37

There was a lot of that from him on the stand. Yeah. What a mess. I know. He's the kind of guy like you want to prosecute. You know, he's, oh, my gosh, I was appalled at him.

**Liz Farrell** 48:48

He is disgusting. I have one last question for you. And it's not the how do you balance? Work question, I promise you. But it's as somebody who has a heart for victims and wants to give them a voice and give them a platform? How are you able to not take your work home with you at night because I think it is such a different to do your job with compassion and be able to communicate that to the audience so that they feel that compassion as well. It's not something that you can just, you know, it just goes out your mouth and just exists out there. It's coming from inside of you. So how are you able to do that and not take it home with you?





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**Julie Grant** 49:28

Right Liz? And thank you for that question. And so in a lot of ways I do take it home. I'm very much an empath you know, and Eric's been you know, talking with me a lot more as he's been on the show you I'm sure he sees that and you know, listen, as we get to know each other, you'll see it too. I kind of I tend to really take on those those two and I was like that when I was a prosecutor and I still am and so, you know, I'll take it home in the sense that, you know, I'm keeping them on my mind in my heart in my prayers. I'm doing what I can on the show for them. And then also, you know, realizing like there are certain things that are within my control. And there's certain things that are not, you know, I'm not the prosecutor on the cases we have. I'm hoping and praying for justice, I'm shining a light as much as I can, talking to the families as much as is unable. And then what I try to do is, is allow for those other moments of diversion because it can be so saddening, what we deal with, and I'm so grateful, it makes me more grateful for all of my blessings. And whenever I'm having a bad day about something little just thinking about how much worse you know, one of our case victims has it and I try to really use those moments of love and like I love, you know, stand up comedy, for instance, I love going to concerts I love and on the show, you know, Eric knows we've had many good laughs on the show, you know, like where you take those moments. There are funny moments, sometimes in really serious trials. And I had one the other day where I mean, it was this treadmill abuse murder trial that we've been covering, right. And the defense attorneys are really good, really good. Italian defense attorneys last names Gallucci, and he's outstanding, his cross and he was crossing the child's mother who was no saint and believe me, she didn't do right by that child. And she's crossing her and he's asking her about the eggs and the fish that she



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threw at the home and he's saying, you know, you went to the supermarket right? And she's going Yeah, I did. And uh, well, what did you buy? You know, I bought eggs and you bought fish? Yeah, that's right. Well, what kind of fish I don't remember. Well, was an expensive fish. And she goes, No, and he goes off so you bought cheap the fish to throw it? They know it's like a funny little and everybody laughed and I laughed on the show. And then you know, I get somebody you know, of course, because you know, haters gonna hate and it's just, you know, people who want to spew hate love to just try to twist something. I had somebody reach out. How dare you laugh during this trial, a child is dead. And I Oh, I clapped back and I said, How dare you say to me that I'm not an advocate for child abuse prevention. You don't know a thing about me? And that was a funny moment. I stand by to laugh, you should try it.

**Eric Bland** 52:08

You know, we need levity. Sometimes you gotta laugh instead of cry.

**Julie Grant** 52:12

Yes, exactly. Find those moments like Joan Rivers used to say, they're just jokes. It's just moments of levity. And so, you know, to answer your question was I try to, like, have as much diversion, like workouts, spend time with family friends, like, you guys know, I'm a talker, you know, I have all my phone dates with all my friends, you know, and try to really just not focus so much on the stuff that is, you know, out of my control, and so upsetting, I try to do everything I can. And then, you know, say prayers at night and, you know, get a good night's sleep and just try to, you know, do that honest, good, authentic work in the next morning.



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### **Liz Farrell** 52:49

Thank you for saying that, because I've realized, you know, what, in what you're saying, I think, is knowing what's in your control and what's not in your control. And I think that especially, you know, when we were covering the Murdaugh trial, in the lead up to it, I think we had a really bad idea of what was in our control, because we we've really felt like if we don't bring this to light, if we don't say something, if we don't step up, you know, this could happen or that you know, that he won't end up getting charged or, you know, what have you so I think it was sort of I don't want to say it's not it wasn't arrogant on our part, but it's certainly taking on much more of a burden than perhaps we need to moving forward because I do think I think that's exactly it. You're right. It's like identifying what's in your control and what's not in your control.

### **Eric Bland** 53:31

I felt bad during the murder trial for for Liz and Mandy, because they they were bringing in his home. Julie, they were they really had PTSD from because they were covering every aspect of it. They were covering the murders, they were covering the civil stuff, and on the front end of it and getting a lot of trolls and got beat up on the internet.

### **Julie Grant** 53:55

Don't take constructive criticism from people who haven't constructed anything. Mera Bali showed that on his Instagram recently, yeah, it's hard. You know. And as you were saying that Eric with PTSD and all of that, I thought of another really important point that I forgot to mention, Liz and Eric, and I'm sorry, and that is going to therapy. So one thing that happens, and I do it, I'm not saying this for like any praise, I'm just saying I've learned this through the volunteer work that I've done



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with victims, is that you take on vicarious trauma, when you're involved in the story and you're advocating and you're in, you know, and you really have to take care of your mental health. And so I go to therapy, I think therapy is like the greatest thing in the world. And so I see my therapist, just about once a week and you know, and sometimes it's just having a talk about like the case involving you know, whether it's a dead baby or something that's really upsetting or, you know, whatever it is that's causing you some mental anguish and grief. I think it's really important that we maintain our mental health and keep that good balance just like we do our workouts and you know and all that good stuff.

**Liz Farrell** 55:04

That's the perfect thing, isn't it? This is Mental Health Awareness Month, isn't it? Yeah, perfect. Excellent. Yeah, get on the couch for us.

**Eric Bland** 55:13

It's our pets were we have pups adjust this and this is kind of how we'll end it. You know, I know that you lost a loved one. You're your favorite dog and you she's a Frenchie lover. We're Frenchie lovers and English Bulldogs. And she was very you know, justifiably down for a couple of months. But now she got a descendant and you're gonna run upstairs real quick and get our pug.

**Julie Grant** 55:37

You and Renee were so sweet and kind with all your compassion with Reign's passing. Let me go upstairs and I'll get Bella Bear.



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**Liz Farrell** 55:44

I'm so excited to see this dog. Is there anything cuter than a puppy? A French bulldog puppy. Oh my goodness.

**Julie Grant** 55:52

So Mandy and Liz and Eric and your Cup of Justice listeners. Pick her up. I want to present to you Bella Bear. She looks like your cocoa too. Yes, she does exactly so excited a moment ago when I couldn't even speak but Eric and Renee were so sweet and compassionate when Reina died and passed along your sympathy and we were just so devastated because you guys know I mean, Liz, you're such an animal lover to Eric and you guys know their family. And when she died, we were so devastated. She's so sweet. She loves Cup of Justice. She's a Cup of Justice. This is her world debut. So we haven't even announced it yet. And so I'm just so grateful for you both for letting me come. She put it on here. My dog Reina who died her male puppy Diesel fathered the litter that Bella was born in in February. So she's 12 weeks right now.

**Eric Bland** 56:57

Let's see she probably have some of her personality. That'd be good. I hope so. Right? She's starting to act like her like real sweet gives kisses as you can show her to your wonderful Cup of Justice audience.

**Liz Farrell** 57:14

I'm so happy for you.

**Eric Bland** 57:16

Well, we are so grateful. You came on our show and we were just honored.



## EPISODE 81: Special Guest Court TV's Julie Grant Talks Victims-First Journalism and What She'd Change About the Justice System

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### **Julie Grant** 57:22

I'm honored you had me! Are you kidding me? Like this is so so nice of you to have me thank you for all the kindness and all your sweet questions and you know, give me Andy my love and yeah, Eric give beautiful Renee my love.

### **Eric Bland** 57:38

Cups down.

### **Liz Farrell** 57:42

Thank you.

### **Eric Bland** 57:44

Great day, cups down.

### **Mandy Matney** 57:54

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](http://lunasharkmedia.com). Interruptions provided by Luna and Joe Pesky.