



EPISODE 43: How Many People Will Go Down For This? Part Two

Mandy Matney 00:02

I don't know how many people will get indicted in the next few months for alleged crimes involving Alex Murdaugh, but the Murdaugh saga has taken a few wild unexpected turns in the last week. And the more we learned, the more disgusted we are with those involved in this. My name is Mandy Matney. I've been investigating the Murdaugh family for three years now. This is the Murdaugh Murders podcast with David Moses and Liz Farrell. As police are investigating the five deaths that have been tied to the Murdaugh family, we're also trying to answer a big question. In this case, what happened to the money? Disgraced attorney Alex Murdaugh stands accused of stealing more than \$9 million from his clients so far, and we're still trying to figure out exactly what he was doing with all that money. So far this follow the money trail has led us down some strange, unexpected paths. Remember following the money is what led FITS News to uncovering Alex Murdaugh's ties with alleged drug smuggler Barrett T Boulware, who was the former owner of Moselle. Following the money also led us to discovering the strange and mysterious jellyfish operation tied to multiple PMPED attorneys. Also, the money trail led us to a mysterious \$5,000 check written to a Yemassee police chief just weeks after the murders, so yes, following the money in the Murdaugh murders case has been a wild ride so far, but we never expected it to take us to the story that Liz broke in the last week. The headline, which I believe should get the award for headline of the year said Alex Murdaugh paid \$110,000 for a funeral home and 2020 that seems unusual. For a lot of people, especially those of us who watch Ozark on Netflix, the headline turn next and raised eyebrows. What is the guy connected to so many deaths in missing money doing paying \$110,000 for a funeral home? Like every story

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involving Alex Murdaugh and his alleged gains, this one is complicated. So we're gonna break it down for you brick by brick.

Liz Farrell 02:37

When all is said and done with the Murdaugh case, we're not sure where Alex's funeral home purchase is going to fall on the long spectrum of strange twists, but it's gotta rank high because this strange twist has other strange twists contained within it. Honestly, I've never seen anything like it. This all starts with a funeral home in St. Paul, run by the Martin family. Earlier this year in January, the receivership team, the attorneys who are appointed by the court to account for all of Alex's assets subpoenaed the owner of the funeral home for quote, any and all documents in their possession regarding the transaction referenced within including but not limited to any correspondence, text messages or emails. The transaction in question is a wire transfer Alex made in January 2020 from his personal checking account at Palmetto State Bank to a bank in Darien, Georgia for the purchase of a funeral home, a Cadillac hearse, a limo and some other property. The funeral home which is in Brunswick, Georgia, and that's about two hours from Hampton County was called Haul, Jones and Brown and it had been owned by this guy A. Brown who was so respected that he had a park named after him before he died in 2019. After his death and the death of his wife, the funeral home went into foreclosure and was put up for sale by Southeastern Bank sometime in December 2019. John H. Martin, the director and owner of Martin's funeral home in St. Paul, which is in Hampton County, put a bid in for the business and then somehow Alex Murdaugh got involved.



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Mandy Matney 04:14

Also involved was Russell Laffitte who signed off on the transaction at Palmetto State Bank and the mysterious Blanca. I'm not sure if this is the same Blanca that Alex and Buster talked about in one of their jailhouse phone calls but someone named Blanca. Okay the transaction as well Russell and Blanca's involvement was likely just bank protocol. But it's still worth noting because of how often in our Murdaugh reporting we come across the same ensemble of characters. The funny thing with all of this, by the way, is that Alex sent the wrong amount to the Georgia bank at first because, of course he did. Ultimately he wired just over \$100,000 to purchase this funeral home, and it's bits and pieces on behalf of John Martin. Now back in present time, the receivership wants to know more information about this. So they subpoena Barton and the funeral home for their records and nothing happens. The receivers then send a certified letter to Martin being like a hey, you kind of have to do this by the end of March, or we're gonna have to get a little ugly about it, but still nothing. So they filed a motion to compel Martin to produce the documents. And that is when FITS News wrote about this very strange situation.

Liz Farrell 05:37

It obviously raised questions for us such as this one. Why did Alex Murdaugh buy a funeral home in Georgia? I swear there was one brief moment where I pictured grabbing my dog and my passport and moving to New Zealand where Alex can never find me because he probably doesn't know that's a country. Another important question it raised is this where some of that allegedly stolen money went. So get



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this. It might have been. Here's why. Within the hour of me publishing this story, I got a text from Mandy, she was like, You're not going to believe this. The Funeral Home Guy is the father of one of Alex's victims, allegedly. The team at FITS News kicked into gear. Jen Wood, our researcher at FITS was able to independently verify what Mandy's source had told her and then I updated the story because it appears that Alex Murdaugh loaned money to a family from whom he is accused of stealing nearly \$600,000 from and as we found out a day later, that family, the alleged victims of one of Alex's schemes, says they paid back the money to Alex the alleged thief. I mean, how perverse is that? Okay, so twist number one Alex purchased a funeral home on behalf of someone else. Twist number two, that someone else is the father of Dion Martin, who was a teenager and 2013 when Alex represented him in a personal injury case, and Alex is literally facing felony charges for taking almost \$600,000 from them in 2015 and in 2016. Twist number three, after not answering the subpoena or the follow up letter, John Martin hopped to it. The day after we published the story he contacted us at FITS News and gave us a whole bunch of paperwork that he said proved he and his wife had paid back Murdaugh. We have a story about this posted now on fitsnews.com, where we break down what those documents showed. But soon after we received that email from Mr. Martin, the receivership team withdrew their motion. Now, twist number four. Turns out the Brunswick Georgia business is not the first time Martin's Funeral Home has had a secondary location. And honestly, you guys are not going to believe this. But here it is. In 2009 after years of people whispering about this an investigation was opened and the rumors turned out to be true.



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Mandy Matney 07:58

Five years earlier this man James Heinz died at 60 years old, he died of skin cancer. He was a preacher and even a guitarist and a funk fan. He lived in Allendale. So this funeral home called Cave Funeral Services which no longer exists and you'll understand why in a second handled the arrangements. At the funeral, Heinz's body was displayed only from the chest up. He was in a regular sized casket, which was notable because Mr. Heinz was a big man. He was six feet seven inches tall. How did they get Mr. Heinz to fit in his casket? An unlicensed employee who turned out to be the father of the funeral home director used an electric saw. Yes, I'm serious. He used an electric saw to cut off Mr. Heinz's legs between the ankle and calf and then he put Mr. Heinz legs back in the casket with him. So it took five years but finally the corner exhumed Mr. Heinz body to verify this and sure enough, it was real. The same year 2009 Michael Cave the owner of Cave Funeral Services was fined and he had his funeral directors license revoked by the State Board. The funeral home which was close to celebrating 50 years of business was ordered to close. Nothing happened to his dad though. Duffy Stone, the 14th circuit solicitor, declined to press charges even though it seemed like a pretty direct case from the outside. You can't desecrate a body in South Carolina, it's illegal. Seems like sawing off a man's legs for him to fit in a casket without telling the family without offering the option for them to buy a larger casket is a desecration. But given that Randolph Murdaugh and Alex Murdaugh both had prosecutorial power at the time, this should not surprise us.



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Liz Farrell 09:59

The whole Lion's family sued Charlie cave and cave funeral services in 2007, two years before they had definitive proof of the leg sawing. According to the Allendale County Public Index Russell, the feets cousin was one of the defense attorneys in the case. According to our sources, the Heinz family was represented by a Beaufort attorney who likely would have associated his case with a PMPED attorney because of where the case was located. This case settled quickly in 2007. Carmen Mullen was the judge. Allendale county is years behind and its transparency so there are no documents to view in the case. At any rate, we are very sorry that the Heinz family had to go through that unimaginable ordeal. A month after Cave funeral services was shut down Martin purchased the business and opened an Allendale location for his funeral home and that same spot. He had to have the purchase approved by the State Board, which they did after telling him under no circumstances are Michael and Charlie Cave to do any day to day business at your funeral home. John Martin assured the board that this wouldn't happen and said that all of the embalming will occur at the ESTA location. That didn't happen. Instead, Martin no longer has the Allendale location in 2014. He was under investigation by the State Board for allowing the Caves to continue working at their old funeral home and for not filing a woman's death certificate despite numerous reminders to do so from the state's health department. In 2015 the state revoked his license and though he appealed that revocation the court upheld it. Why then is Mr. Martin with help from his longtime attorney Alex Murdaugh purchasing another funeral home if he doesn't have a license? Great question. So in February 2020, the state board allowed



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Mr. Martin to get an apprenticeship license, which expired March 1 of this year. The apprenticeship license means he must work directly under another licensed Undertaker. His license is held under that of a 70 something year old woman who appears to live in Charleston. There's been a lot of speculation why Alex Murdaugh is involved in this in any way. If you ask Mr. Martin, he'll tell you that it's because Alex was his attorney, and he simply fronted the money and they paid it back. And that's that sources of ours who are familiar with the situation, however, believe that this arrangement if Alex was still involved with it, of course existed to help bring more wrongful death cases, Alex's way. If that's the case, then wow. Anyone who helps someone buy a funeral home in the hopes of generating leads for future thefts, alleged future thefts would probably be considered a genius, albeit an evil one. Worth noting is that a certain alleged co-conspirator of Alex named Mr. Cory Howerton Fleming is currently fighting hard, like to an epic degree to keep his law license in Georgia. Our Dear Cory episode goes into all the details about that. We're not sure if that's in any way connected, but it is interesting. The other theories as to why Alex might have gotten involved with a funeral home deal are much darker and not so enterprising. The last thing we'll say about the Georgia funeral home, one thing is for certain, when you follow Alex Murdaugh's money, it will take you to some really odd places.

Mandy Matney 13:20

And we'll be right back. So as we follow the money in this case, we found something else super disturbing. Remember back in March, when we reported on Palmetto State Bank vice president Chad



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Westendorf's shocking deposition in the glorious Satterfield case, the one where he couldn't remember what the term fiduciary meant. Well, Chad mentioned a little bombshell in that deposition that we didn't get to on the first go around, but trust us this is important. Westendorf testified that his bank routinely issued something called lawyer loans to his clients of Alex Murdaugh and Murdaugh's former law firm PMPED. According to bank documents in correspondence obtained by FITS News, the loans were given to Murdaugh's clients for personal expenses while they were awaiting the outcomes of their cases. These were short term high interest loans that in some cases were nearly double by the time they could be paid off with that settlement money, usually well past the expected payoff date Sources close to the situation. See that Murdaugh, in some instances, suggested these loans to clients and sent his clients to the bank for what he called help bill the loans were technically unsecured. They were in essence backed by Murdaugh signature in the signatures of his associates on the PMPED letterhead. The loans were set up in a way that guaranteed the bank would receive additional funds in interest as well as penalties. The thing to note here is that lawyers in South Carolina cannot loan their clients money or guarantee any loans that they take out while awaiting their case to settle or go to trial. Ultimately, these loans are an important piece of the puzzle because they show how close the relationship was between PMPED and Palmetto State Bank and lines might have been blurred as a result. The loans are also an example of how Alex Murdaugh and the bank might have been using vulnerable people to further enrich themselves. Now remember, Russell Laffitte whose family has owned the bank for generations is connected to several cases in which



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Murdaugh's clients allegedly had money stolen. He was fired by the board in January just hours after FITS News published a story on the Laffitte's involvement with the Beekman case. And speaking of the Pinckney case, this week, attorney and State Representative Justin Bamberg, who is representing Hakeem Pinckney's family obtained a paper trail of checks that tell us more about where the stolen funds were going and who Alex Murdaugh's associates were if you remember, Hakeem Pinckney was paralyzed in a catastrophic car accident before his mysterious death in 2011. Hakeem's mother Pamela and his cousin Natasha were also severely injured in the crash. As FITS News previously reported Alex Murdaugh and his alleged co-conspirators apparently work together in a fashion similar to the glorious Satterfield scheme to defraud the Pinckney family of funds gained from a lawsuit they filed on Hakeem's behalf in 2010. The same players were involved in this case, Corey Fleming, Alex Murdaugh and Palmetto State Bank Alex inquiry have been indicted for this case, while former Palmetto State bank CEO wrestler feet has not been charged Luffy was apparently paid unusually high fees to manage the Pinckney's finances. So we already know all of that. But what we didn't know about the Pinckney case was what happened to the money and apparently who benefited from the theft. And here's Justin Bamberg.

Justin Bamberg 17:13

What we found was very disturbing, quite frankly, leads us to kind of wondering, again, how did no one catch this? I mean, it's somewhat of a version of a Ponzi scheme or something like that. And what we see is, there's actually a disbursement sheet, which is the disbursement of



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client funds, you know, how everyone gets paid how the client gets paid, and one of the disbursement sheets appears to have a signature on it that it's for Russell Laffitte. And it was very odd because there was this \$309,000 and change that on the disbursement page indicated that it was being paid to Palmetto State Bank, again, Palmetto State bank wasn't the client, Hakeem Pinckney and his family that was the client. So as we're looking through the checks, and you know, everyone wanted to know, where did the money go? Where did the money go? Well, now we know the answer. For money stolen, misappropriated from the paint the family was used, for example \$100,000 of it went to Charlie Murphy Jr. And there's a check payable to Charlie Murphy Jr. I believe that's Russell Laffitte's father for \$100,000.

Mandy Matney 18:32

Okay, so I'm going to have to repeat that because it is a bombshell Justin is talking about a check that allegedly shows how \$100,000 of Hakeem Pinckney's settlement money went to Charles Luffy Jr, who was Russell Laffitte's father, who was CEO of the bank at the time, that is a big deal. That money was stolen just two months after Hakeem suddenly died in October 2011. That lawsuit, the one that ultimately allowed Murdaugh and his co-conspirators to allegedly steal around a million dollars from Hakeem's family settled on October 7 2011. According to court documents, just four days later, Hakeem's ventilator was apparently unplugged for 30 minutes before Proven Health North Augusta employees noticed. He died suddenly on October 11 2011. He was 21 years old. This is horrific, although not horrific enough to stop



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Alex Murdaugh, from pillaging Hawkins estate and rewarding his friends and his family, allegedly.

Justin Bamberg 19:45

But of all the things that we saw, one of the most disheartening, we actually came across a money order payable to Randolph Murdaugh, the third in the amount is astronomical. It was three \$129,500 And this is a bank money order drawn on Palmetto State Bank.

Mandy Matney 20:08

I will repeat that what Justin is saying here is one of the checks stolen from the painting family just two months after they lost Hakeem was written to former solicitor at the late Randolph Murdaugh, the third who was still working as an assistant solicitor at the time for Duffy Stone's office. Also, what does that mean for the legitimacy of Randolph Murdaugh's trust and these checks that Justin is referring to? \$100,000 to Charles Laffitte, for example, and \$10,000 to Maggie Murdaugh, yes. I said that Maggie Murdaugh also got a \$10,000 check written on December 21st 2011. These checks were allegedly stolen from the Pinckney family, just four days before they were about to go through their first Christmas without Hakeem.

Justin Bamberg 21:02

Blood money, is what it is. What's floating around his blood money. Pamela Pinckney, that's also Thomas King paid me they bled to receive that compensation. Is this blood money floating around? The CEO of the bank, the chair of the board gets \$100,000 of it.



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Mandy Matney 21:20

And the thing about those who received that blood money, they all should have been asking questions about where it was coming from and why.

Justin Bamberg 21:31

There are rumors, obviously, oh, man, Alex obviously owed a lot of people money. But unfortunately, until I see promissory notes until I see real loan paperwork, I don't view those as legitimate loans. You know, if for some reason, Randolph Murdaugh, the third had made, for whatever reason, a \$100,000 PLUS loan to Alice, unless there's paperwork that ain't no loan in my book, if Charlie Laffitte Jr. had made a loan to Alex or Alex owed the bank money, unless there's paperwork proving that based on everything that we've seen, based on the callousness of how these clients, he's living, breathing, people who trusted a lawyer and trusted a bank and trusted a conservator who was a banker, I don't see it. You know, people, people need to speak up. And if their name is on these money orders, if their name is sign to check that they were responsible for monitoring the bank account, or monitoring the audit books or hex monitoring rustle of feet, they need to speak up and answer. Why did you get my clients' money? When Hakeem is sitting in a nursing home, as a quadriplegic who can't hear a hands on event, he can't talk and he suffocates in his own body and tuned in his own mind. Why did you get his money? What explanation that Alex Murdaugh, you know, if Alex has to borrow money from you to the tune of 300,000 or \$100,000? If he has to borrow money from the bank to put a mortgage on his house, or to support this, this Murdaugh charters or



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whatever, if he's got to borrow that kind of money, if he's late on payments, or not making payments? Did no one care to ask Alex? Where the hell did you get half a million dollars from overnight? These are very legitimate questions that if everything was on the up and up should be really easy to answer. And we're waiting on those answers.

Mandy Matney 23:37

And then there are some mind boggling checks in here checks that raise a lot of questions, checks that appear like Alex was robbing Peter to pay Paul and why.

Justin Bamberg 23:48

We see checks, or money orders made payable to other conservatorships. For example, Russell, a fiend was conservator of X clients conservatorship, and it looks like Mr. Murphy would loan money to Alex Murdaugh, from this conservatorship only for another case where rustle of feed is also conservator money from that client to use to pay back the client that conservative money was just floating on. And these are not small amounts either. There's a money order payable to another client's conservatorship for over \$53,000. There were other money orders payable for astronomical amounts, or some of this money was just converted to straight cash and we have no idea who received that cash.

Mandy Matney 24:43

The paper trail of evidence raises a lot of questions about the entire institution, a Palmetto State Bank. Supporters of the bank have claimed



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Russell was just one bad egg and a good family in a good institution. But how is it that no one else at the bank has ever caught this? And what about federal regulators? This shows a complete failure across the board.

Justin Bamberg 25:07

Well, people have to remember, when Russell Laffitte was initially suspended and then terminated from his position at the bank, he had a certain title. Today, we're talking about 11 years ago, rustle of feet rustle of feet was not the owner of the bank. Right? The bank was owned by the board, the family members and things like that. Russell Laffitte wasn't CEO of the bank, back then. Russell Laffitte was basically an employee of the bank. He, I believe, he was the branch manager for the Hampton branch of the bank. But how is someone who's not the CEO doing all of this? And no one knows. How is it that Charley Laffitte Jr who was the CEO of the bank, up until the rangetop, passed to Russell in 2020? How was it that Charlie Laffitte Jr, the CEO of the bank, the chair of the Palmetto State Bank Board, how did he get \$100,000 of my clients money? And the person in the center of it isn't even like the person in charge and charge by their people above him. There are people you supposed to be answering to 11 years ago, and no one still caught it? You know, I could see if if, if he's the CEO at the time, you know, he's the president at the time. And he's beyond question because he's the boss. That's not the situation we were dealing with. He wasn't the president. He wasn't the CEO, he wasn't the boss. He may have been a branch manager in some other leadership position, who the heck was checking behind him.



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Mandy Matney 26:43

So who is checking this now to make sure everything is operating legitimately at Palmetto State bank, the bank is still open, it's still doing business. It's been about six months since we've known about the problems involving the bank. And yet there hasn't been any meaningful declaration to the public by law enforcement or regulators that someone has customers backs, and that in assessing the damage, the bank doesn't have the opportunity to rewrite history and that the clients who were allegedly harmed by Alex in the bank are not being harmed further by hasty deals that only serve to benefit the alleged perpetrators.

Justin Bamberg 27:23

You know, we said some episodes ago that something in the milk wasn't clean. And at this point, I'd go a step further and say something in the milk is rotten. And when I see this kind of money being taken, when Russell Laffitte had a fiduciary duty to these people, and Alex Murdaugh, in the firm has a fiduciary duty to these people. And then I see checks, life changing money for the painting the fan, and I see money orders, I see checks drawn on Palmetto State Bank payable to Palmetto State Bank. I see money orders of money that should have gone to these people for their pain and suffering and what they lived through and what I came to die for being made payable to low feet family members, and Murdaugh family members and Murdaugh's businesses. And it's Miss Pinckney is a woman of faith in God. And like she said, she forgives Alex because that's our Christian duty. I'm a Christian too. And I'm not forgiving anybody right now. But in fact, I'm



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pretty pissed to see this because I truly understand what what they went through. You know, Miss Pinckney had over 10 surgeries to try to fix her leg. What Hakeem lived through. Natasha is blind in one eye, because of the accident she was in. And I see all of these Uber wealthy people, Uber wealthy institutions, the bank, the firm, Uber wealthy families who've enjoyed immense wealth for 100 years, getting wealthier, on the pain of innocent people, maybe miss paint me needs to pray for me, because I'm not there yet. And I don't know that I ever will get there to be honest with you, as an attorney, and a professional as somebody who tries to live and be a good person. I don't understand how people did this.

Mandy Matney 29:29

And we'll be right back. We wanted to share some exciting sort of personal news that broke in the last week as deadline first reported a drama series based off the Murdaugh Murders Podcast is in development at UCP. A division of Universal Studio Group. I can't believe I'm saying these words, but I will be an executive producer on the show. We wanted to thank all of you for your support, but more so we wanted to share a little bit more about why we chose to pursue this course, and how it aligns with our missions to expose the truth, get the story straight and give voice to the victims. There have been a number of organizations and people chopping the story around in an attempt to make it into documentaries, movies and shows. I, unfortunately, have a displeasure of encountering many of these people who clearly wanted to fleece victims of their agency and reap benefits without a greater calling than just selling the story for a paycheck. That is until I met two



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time Emmy nominated filmmaker Erin Lee Carr and writer producer Michael De Fuller. You might recognize Erin's name from her documentaries, such as *at the Heart of Gold*, which honestly made me cry. It exposed the deep trauma inflicted by Larry Nasser and USA Gymnastics officials. Or you might remember *I Love You Now Die* another one of Aaron's amazing documentaries, which focused on the tragic teen texting suicide case, and was recently made into the *Girl from Plainville*, a popular show on Hulu. Or you'll remember *Mommy Dead and Dearest* the shocking documentary telling Gypsy Rose a Story. Erin is also an author of *All That You Leave Behind* a memoir that focuses on her relationship with her late father David Carr, who was a celebrated journalist. I immediately connected with Aaron when we first met in August 2021. Erin has a wealth of knowledge in this field. And before we met, I was already a huge fan of hers, particularly I admired the way she told victims stories with such empathy and detail. This week, we spoke with Erin and Michael Fuller about this exciting project and we wanted to share this exclusive info with our MMP listeners. First of all, I asked Erin how her experience would help craft the story into a scripted project.

Erin Lee Carr 32:10

I've made my life and dedicated my life to telling crime stories but told in a new and intense to an empathic way. And I think that throughout the years of making it I'm on my seventh or eighth or ninth project right now. And it's leading from a place of studying the human condition and really trying to understand morality and when people take over and make these bad decisions and so you know, whether it be thought



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crimes or mommy dead and dearest or I love, you know, die or a gymnastics film at the heart of gold, and then now working on girl from Plainville, you know, I feel in a way that I feel like I'm ready to take on something like this, you're never actually ready. And that's why I get to work with the best of us like Michael and Alex and Nick. But I think that it's been a lot of hard work and a lot of investigating. And it's bringing me to this moment of working with these people that really, really do this for a living and do it really well.

Mandy Matney 33:09

Erin's style is as poetic as it is critically acclaimed. Having worked on the adaptation of a number of tragically real stories, we asked Erin, how she believes this story might be delivered in a scripted series.

Erin Lee Carr 33:23

I mean, it's an American tragedy. I think that when you have these types of generations that are built together in the south, such as the Murdaugh family, you know, I think that there's a lot of things that have happened to make them powerful. And when you look at the haves and have nots of Hampton County, I think that it's important to take this sort of case and understand it not just as like a grisly case, but as what you do in your podcast, which is really explore and rectify the imbalances. One, it was a crime that I really wanted to know what happened because there are a lot of victims that have not seen justice, but to I think that there's a lot of societal reckoning that can come from a case like this.



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Mandy Matney 34:04

In fact, Erin, Michael, Liz, David, and I all share that common belief that monumental, unnecessary changes in our judicial system can and should result from exposing a case like this.

Erin Lee Carr 34:21

I mean, I also think it's like the mystery revealing itself, like while we're making it, and the sort of things that are at play and factor, but also like the justice of it, will we see justice for the lives that have been taken? And I think that in ways like you would think that that was typically for a written piece or for a documentary, but I think in working with you guys, there is this sort of process of you guys reporting it out on the podcast, and we're able to continue and sort of write it in and so the unfolding element while tricky it's just it's one of the biggest news stories of the entire year last year and this year, and so I just think that yeah, like more have yet to come.

Mandy Matney 35:10

Erin has the unique ability to honor the humanity of people while exposing some of the most inhumane actions. We asked Erin what elements of this story really drew her in?

Erin Lee Carr 35:23

You know, I'm excited to jump in and no really three dimensionalize the women of the story I think that I mostly make things about women obviously this is going to be male and female focus it's um you know, I'm really interested in studying this understanding you know, Michael



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has made you know career out of working on things like that so I'm been really kind of most excited to see how he works with it and kind of adding to that

Mandy Matney 35:47

Michael D Fuller is a Columbia South Carolina native in College of Charleston graduate recognized for producing and writing work on Cinemax is Corey the Peabody award winning, rectify, and most recently lock and key on Netflix. Michael is a multi generational South Carolinian with deep knowledge of the systems and South Carolina in a keen interest in exposing how that network has calcified an organized cast of haves and have nots in this region. I asked him why he was first interested and diving deeper into the Murdaugh story.

Michael D Fuller 36:24

What drew me to it is I am a South Carolina native born and raised and my family goes back multiple generations. And you know, so that was the hook for me for this after gate. But then really the thing that I responded to the most as I'm sure so many people who've been exposed to this story was Mandy, via your dog and reporting on this and not letting the good old boy network and system pull their normal levers of power to make all these things go away. And I think, you know, having seen the way that firsthand, growing up, there's a way that that that network, and that system keeps to have is having and have nots, not having, you know, it's just a fascinating study, when all of that generational privilege, they couldn't pull those levers that they had at their disposal as easily as they used to be able to and large part thanks



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to you putting the victims forward in your reporting and your investigation. I think that's by and large, what really, really drew me in personally.

Mandy Matney 37:20

Michael's works often strike deep into the heart of the struggles between big money and those left behind stories where the justice system airs in the regular folks have to pick up the pieces. We asked Michael how he will approach writing about the victims and the saga.

Michael D Fuller 37:38

Maggie is a fascinating study because of how little is we sort of still know about her because she's both a Murdaugh obviously, but then also a victim and hasn't really had the chance to tell her story. I think Mallory is another one who's you know, just getting to know her, she feels like so many, you know, girls that I grew up with are cousins of mine that I'm very close to and you know, just hearing about her life and how it was just so tragically cut short. So I think there's, as you guys know, having lived in this chapter and verse For years now, there's just so many fascinating pockets of this thing. And just when you think you've found the most intriguing and vivid, then you turn around, and there's a whole other one that's presented itself.

Mandy Matney 38:18

And honestly, when I think about what is most important to me when working on this project is my duty to the victims to not sensationalized the truth for entertainment value, and to not re victimize individuals



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who have undergone an incredible amount of trauma, I can promise everyone listening to this podcast that I would have never agreed to this, if Aaron and Michael weren't on the exact same page,

Michael D Fuller 38:45

The thing that's going to do what they want is going to be the thing that we want, which is for this to be well received. And part of that is going to be respecting and honoring the victims, you know, finding that balance is going to be a main priority of ours. But I think you know, that's where we can emphasize both the work that you guys have done and your mission statement as it were in terms of leading with that and that also being you know, key to what we wanted to accomplish creatively.

Mandy Matney 39:11

And if you've seen any of Erin Lee Carr's, documentaries, you would know that she not only has remarkable storytelling skills as you watch, you can feel that Aaron genuinely cares for the people in her films about their lives, about their journeys, and about how each story can impact those watching for the better.

Erin Lee Carr 39:35

Yeah, I think true crime right now is it's all about the crime. What are the grisly elements? What are the circumstances? What's the evidence? Where was the body? What did it look like? And I think that this is this you know, very intense Americana obsession with the crime, but the ways that I do it is what happened all the days that came before



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that, and what are all the days that came after that? because all these lives have to intersect at this very specific moment for something like this to happen, I try to not denote victims as victims, right? They have these huge, big lives before they were killed on that very one day. And so I think that it's all about trying to add complexity and character and really three dimensional vantage points of people's lives. So that it's like, it's not just, you know, Mallory Beach got killed on this night of what she was hoping for who she was dating, what she had love. What was her family, like? What does she look like in pictures? You know, was there you know, what did she really love and care about? And so I think that I'm the same with Stephen and the same with Korea and like, you know, I think that it's the sort of the lives of these people and not just the perpetrator right.

Mandy Matney 41:13

The Murdaugh Murder's podcast is created by me, Mandy Matney and my fiance David Moses. Our executive editor is Liz Farrell. Produced by Luna Shark Productions.