



EPISODE 57: Broken Trust & The Unseen Villains

Mandy Matney 00:02

I don't know how much more ruthless convenience store owner Greg Parker and his legal team can possibly get. But one thing is now very clear. I'm horrified by the behavior we're seeing in every twist of the story. And just because some people are less horrible than Alex Murdaugh doesn't mean they can escape accountability. My name is Mandy Matney. I have been investigating the Murdaugh family for more than three years now. This is the Murdaugh Murders podcast with David Moses and Liz Farrell. A whole lot has gone on in the last few weeks that could change the course of the Mallory Beach lawsuit, which is arguably one of the most important unsettled civil cases in this entire saga. Over the weekend. A big story on the lawsuit was published on the Wall Street Journal that we need to talk about. But first, here's Liz with a quick update on the Plyler's.

Liz Farrell 01:08

We just wanted to say that we have been blown away by the response to our last episode about the Plyler case. Alaina Plyler's powerful and emotional account of what she and her sister went through with Alex Murdaugh as their attorney and Russel Laffitte, their conservator, gave us an important new perspective on the damage caused by Alex and Russell's alleged crimes against vulnerable clients. And unsurprisingly, it made people even more angry to see just how much those two men were taking advantage of people in crisis. And people with the least amount of power in the situation. It made listeners even more intent on making sure justice prevails. In this case, it's reassuring to know that our audience cares about the emotional damage from these crimes as much as the physical damage. You guys are showing so much empathy



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and concern for the victims and that fuels us to keep fighting for them. So thank you. We will be revisiting the Plyler case soon. So stay tuned for more about what we're finding there. After the episode aired last week. Listeners also reached out to us to ask us more about the revelation that Maggie Murdaugh's father Terry Brandstetter played a role in securing annuities for the Plyler sisters. We don't know the extent of Mr. Brandstetter's involvement in these cases, but we have now been told that his name has shown up more than once in connection to Alex cases. Maggie's father was an insurance broker. There is no indication that he did anything wrong by serving as a broker for his son in law's clients. But it is confusing. Alex was already using forge in the pilot case and forge consulting the real one is a broker meaning another broker wasn't necessary. Really what we think we're seeing here is yet another method Alex would use to make those around him feel beholden to him by giving them an opportunity to earn money off his cases. favors like this one are a reason why it has been so hard for law enforcement to get anyone to speak out against Alex. They either remain silent, out of loyalty or are silent because of Mutually Assured self destruction. Maggie's family has not spoken publicly about where they stand on the charges against Alex or whether they believe him when he says he didn't kill Maggie and Paul, we do know that Maggie's father is seriously ill right now. We also know that Alex had been desperate to reach out to the Brandstetter since he was detained last fall, and we know that he was finally put in contact with them from behind bars. Sometime this past spring. We have heard that Maggie's parents might be giving Alex the benefit of the doubt here but without knowing the full extent of Mr. Brandstetter's participation as a broker. In these cases, it's impossible to even guess



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that whether those deals have any influence over how Maggie's father feels about Alex today. But we're still going to look into this and we will update you once we know more.

Mandy Matney 03:53

In every episode we publish and every story I write, I aim for truth and transparency to guiding principles in my journalism career. So when we talk about the Mallory Beach story in the Parker's convenience store lawsuit, I need to be truthful and transparent about a couple things to let you all know where I'm coming from old school journalism rules tell reporters to stay out of the story. But the truth is, if you're doing your job as a journalist exposing the truth that others are afraid to tell in holding the powerful to account, the story becomes personal and it is impossible to avoid that because without your reporting, the chain of events swirling around your story just wouldn't exist. And it's hard to ignore that particularly when I was reporting on Parker shenanigans back in 2020. And yes, this lawsuit has been going on for a very long time. Greg Parker and his team of lawyers erroneously claimed in a motion that I had obtained a confidential video and then I had a person No relationship with Mark Tinsley the attorney who is representing the Beach family, I have said this before, and I will say it again Mark Tinsley never showed me a confidential video, he provided me with a quote from her name Beach about Parker's for a story that I published in FITS News. And later I found out but that same quote was in the video. I don't like to pester grieving mothers for quotes, and I'm assuming attorneys don't like it either. So it made sense at the time to use that quote, In the story, when my name was first mentioned, and emotion from Parker's. I took that as Greg Parker bullying me to back off the

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story. I had written several articles at that point that were not good for Parker's PR team, and I'm sure he wanted to scare me. But here's the thing. None of this has changed my ability to see the facts and Parker's liability in this case, remember, a Parker's worker illegally sold Paul Murdaugh alcohol on February 23 2019, just hours before Mallory Beach died. In my opinion, Parker's liability is indisputable. The transaction is on video, the clerk admitted to the mistake. The Dram Shop laws in South Carolina are very clear on this. Mark Tinsley has argued that the illegal booze sale is not an anomaly for Parker's because the company's culture values speed and profit over accuracy. Just a year before the boat crash, the convenience store settled a separate lawsuit for another improper alcohol sale that led to another death in the same county. Greg Parker has spent millions of dollars on both his defense in the case and on lobbying at the SE state house. So big business guys like himself can avoid liability. That's the thing about the good ol boys when the laws don't bend in their favor. Many of them decide to just throw money at lobbyists and change the law so it bends for them, which is absolutely wrong. And it's just another way to escape responsibility. Most importantly, Greg Parker has been accused of all sorts of dirty tricks in this case, and has shown no respect for the Beaches in the pain. All of this causes them recently preppers turned up the heat against us and subpoenaed Verizon to get records of phone and text conversations that they apparently think Liz and I were having with Mark Tinsley, the Beach's lawyer, there was no reason for Parker to do this other than to harass us because neither Liz nor I had been accused of publishing confidential court materials as Vicki Ward has, if they were trying to get to the bottom of who did that, as they claim, then we were the absolute wrong place to start. On the day I called out this absurd



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subpoena on Twitter and an anonymous person created a Twitter account and the next day I got a threatening tweet from that account, a very serious one. This appears to be a pattern with the evil trolls in the story. So many of the really awful ones, not just the one saying I have vocal fry seem to be connected to Greg Parker, these trolls not only make threats and say horrible things about the victims in their family, they seem to be laser focused on finding something anything that might hurt my credibility. And even though they fail at it, their lives still take up space. And speaking of lies over the weekend, a highly anticipated story was published in The Wall Street Journal that in my opinion, glorified Greg Parker as a self made hardworking American. To me the story was mostly just another example of mainstream media failing to do their jobs in the saga in teaming up with the good ol boys to help boost their narrative. I want to be transparent about something else here my extreme distress for the reporter who wrote the story and here is live.

Liz Farrell 09:05

When Maggie and Paul Murdaugh were murdered last year, the world changed for so many people down here. So many reporters, writers and production companies descended upon the 14th circuit and all of them were desperate for more information on the Murdaugh's and their legacy, which I totally get this story is crazy, and we don't even know the full extent of it yet. During this time, I was still working for the Beaufort County Sheriff's Office so Mandy was alone. She was inundated with breaking news every day. And because we had investigated this family for more than two years. At that point, Mandy knew there were stories that needed to get out there because they deserved attention and



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more scrutiny such as Stephen Smith and Gloria Satterfield, there was a lot of pressure, specifically the pressure Mandy was putting on herself to make sure that the spotlight remained on the victims and on the heart of the story, which is the massive corruption and rampant good ole boys, um, that had led to this moment. This was an opportunity for change and Mandy recognized that but the majority of media that descended on the low country seemed completely unwilling to see past the sexy true crime headlines. Rich man funds wife and son kill that is haunting estate. And they struggled to get anyone from the community to talk to them because of the fear people have of crossing the Murdaughs. So they turn to mandate sometimes in the most rude and obnoxious of ways. She was getting tons of emails and texts daily from reporters who wanted to, quote pick her brain and catch them up on the story. Everyone wanted a piece of her time and her institutional knowledge and when she didn't give it to them, many would vilify her online or behind the scenes. At the same time, the Hollywood interlopers who immediately saw dollar signs with the Murdaugh story, were also trying to get Mandy signed up for whatever they could. And when she dared to ask for time to discuss the proposals with the other people involved in the story, such as the victims and their lawyers, she was made out to be a diva or a rube. It was horrible and very hard to watch. From where I sat, I have seen so many people change and all of this, but not Mandy. From the very beginning, her values have remained the same no matter how many people spread lies about her or used her as a sacrificial pawn in their efforts to manipulate others into signing deals with them. I have been brought to tears so many times over the past year, watching the cruelty Mandy has had to endure just for daring to do her job. And this isn't even coming from the Murdaugh camp. It's



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literally from people who want to shortcut their way to one of the most complex stories in the history of the state. This is all just to say I had a front row seat to all of this as it was happening. And I remember clearly the day she told me about a Wall Street Journal reporter who had approached her. It was like Mandy had been treading water for months, while more and more people were trying to pull her under. And finally there was a person who was actually throwing her a life preserver. Mandy will tell you more about that. But I wanted to first say that throughout all of this, every time Mandy has spoken out about other media, it has gotten twisted by people who have either Mr. Point or are intentionally mischaracterizing her viewpoint for their own personal gain, whatever that might be. It's easier for them to believe that a woman is being caddy or patting herself on the back then to consider that this woman, a journalist, who has been pointing out the broken parts of the justice system is bold enough to turn that criticism inward and point out the broken parts in journalism as well. Both of us have always wanted more media to cover the story. We wanted them to do a great job and uncover everything they can. But we want them to also see how they've been and can be part of the problem. One problem Mandy saw from the beginning was that media were treating this quote, story solely as an opportunity for themselves. They were using the very real people involved in the Murdaugh's world as a means to an end, and in many cases, doing them dirty.

Mandy Matney 13:07

In the meantime, Valerie from the Wall Street Journal did that to me. I don't want her or other reporters doing that to people who I know personally and who I care about and who I know have been directly



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affected by the onslaught of media in this case, which is why I'm calling out Valerie ball rolling right now. Now, every time I call out reporters in this saga, there will always be chattering trolls who want to make me out to be catty, or territorial, when in reality this entire time I've only wanted for there to be change and accountability. I want us all working toward the goal of exposing the truth here not helping the same old people get a leg up and not swindling victims for financial gain. The truth is that I have a really hard time trusting any reporters who swooped into the story after the double homicide happened. And I blame Valerie for a big part of that. Valerie reached out to me in August of 2021. A very dark time in my life when I desperately needed a friend or really just an ally in the media. I was working 14 hour days between the podcasts and FITS News that summer and the constant anxiety of feeling tethered to all things breaking and the Murdaugh story took a huge toll on my mental health. And Liz was not working for FITS News at the time. So I was really feeling alone. I was uncovering information about the Murdaugh family that was horrific and hard to swallow daily. And behind the scenes. These new voltar type characters from national media and documentary companies were relentlessly swooping in and reminding me again of just how ruthless and predatory human beings can be. I felt like this every day and I really wanted to have a friend who was investigating the same evil so I could feel less alone and less hopeless. Unlike so many of the other parachute media types who contacted me last summer in an attempt to get me to catch them up with a Murdaugh story, as I heard so many times, Valerie's entire approach was different. She convinced me that she wanted to be my friend over dinner one night when she was in town last August. She wanted to know all angles of the story, not just the obvious parts and

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told me that she was thankful for my time, and she would be sure to credit FITS News. In our story. We talked about everything that night journalism being a woman in the business, the recent Murdaugh menace, I told her about how David recently proposed and how my world had recently turned upside down and we shared a lot of laughs over multiple margaritas. I really liked her and told her things about the Murdaugh story. I have never told any other mainstream media reporter she gave me a lot of advice that night. And I remember thinking how great it was to feel like I finally had a big sister again in journalism. She told me several times at dinner, that she was not at all trying to compete with me that she was just there to do one story for The Wall Street Journal on the Murdaughs. And that was it. Ironically, it was Valerie who was territorial about the story seemingly on my behalf. This is your story. Don't let anyone steal it. She told me several times at dinner that night. The idea of stealing the story was never the issue. For me, though, I simply wanted reporters covering the story to care enough to do the work themselves. Instead, these mainstream media reporters who had the luxury of spending weeks on a story of time that I just didn't have wanted me to do the legwork for them. And that is not okay. Valerie told me how badly she wanted to write a book. And she wanted to be a published author and asked me multiple times, if I had been offered a book deal in the Murdaugh story, don't worry, it's coming. I remember she assured me and she told me to keep her updated. And she was excited for me. She didn't just ask me about book deal. So she made it a focal point. And when I took as professional encouragement, though, was actually something else altogether. For the next month. We communicated often we share tips and information and it felt great to finally have a legacy news reporter on



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my side, one her first story on the Murdaugh family published in The Wall Street Journal last September. I was excited to read it. But I was immediately shocked to see that Valerie had referred to me as a blogger and said, I'm an investigative journalist. This should have been a big red flag for me, as every journalist on the planet knows that it is intentionally insulting to call a reporter a blogger. In fact, it's a tactic used by a particular group of trolls when they don't like something I've reported. They call me a blogger. It's people like Greg Parker, who benefit when the Wall Street Journal calls me a blogger. When I asked Valerie about this, she laughed it off and eventually corrected the air saying that she and her editor made a compromise to call me a reporter, which is absurd, because I have a degree in journalism and nearly a decade of experience as a journalist at several mainstream newspapers calling me a reporter is not a compromise. It is a fact. I know this is inside baseball, but the whole thing was strange and awkward. I knew that Valerie recognized that she had minimized my position and her story, but I couldn't figure out why she did that. Then I found out what was happening. Shortly after that story ran I found out from my amazing agents at UTA that Valerie Burling Jackson of The Wall Street Journal had submitted a book proposal on the Murdaugh family, she got a book deal, and looking back, she probably referred to me as a blogger to undermine my work. When she was selling her book, she was presenting herself like the only quote unquote real journalist on this story, I wasn't bothered that she got a book deal, it was that her offer of friendship and mentoring seemed to be only a means to an end for her. She was sniffing out the situation and an effort to leverage her own deal, or at least it felt like that I saw her as a friendly face in a sea of monsters, and she saw me as a country bumpkin, who



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she could take advantage of. Now this whole thing crushed me in a way that I never expected. I don't get emotionally involved in a lot of this stuff, because there are only so many emotions a person can handle and one day what Valerie did to me, shook me to my core and made me question so much about my own profession and the types of people who are really behind these national media stories. I had an encounter that kind of stab in the back mean girl behavior since I was in middle school before Valerie, I was convinced that a majority of reporters were decent human beings. And she took that from me. And don't get me wrong. I am not a victim in this. I have gotten plenty of recognition in this story. And I'm not at all worried about competing with Valerie or anyone else in the story. To me, it's not about competition. It's about doing the right things for the right reasons. I believe the future of journalism will rely on people trusting individual reporters in not the companies that they work for journalists will have to earn that trust, they will have to be transparent and be held accountable to the same standards they're expecting from the people they're covering. If we want any hope for the future of journalism, we need to start calling out these national reporters for their bad behavior. Otherwise, this will all continue and nothing will change for the better. So now that you know my personal feelings about this reporter, you should also know that they do not change the fact that Greg Parker made some stunning admissions on the record with Valerie and we need to talk about those first, Parker admitted to something we have long suspected that he is behind this mysterious random blog post about the bo crash that popped up in the summer of 2021. Shortly after the murders of Maggie and Paul Murdaugh. This blog post, which we will talk about more in a minute was the first stone in what we now know is a very short path

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between Parker's team and tabloid reporter Vicky Ward last year, Vicki Ward got her hands on these confidential court materials including photos of Mallory's body, which she then used and a publicly posted sizzle reel that was meant to entice investors to fund her documentary about the Murdaughs. That is a big deal. It is a huge vindication for the Beach family for Martin flee. And for those who have continued to press for the truth, despite the denials and constant bullying from the other side. And this is not the only shocking thing that Greg Parker admitted to in 2020 Sandy Smith, Stephen Smith's mother was visited by two private investigators who told her they wanted to help find her son's killer. Here is Sandy Smith's, lawyer, Mike Hemlock.

Mike Hemlepp 22:34

The two investigators told me that they had been hired by a person who was interested in finding answers in Stephen's case, but that they couldn't tell her who they worked for, because it would be because of confidentiality, which I've never heard of private investigator confidentiality. But that's what she was told at the time that that happened. I was not representing her that was in the summer of 2020. And she was a woman who, whose son had been killed and she was a concerned mother and she was looking for help wherever she could find it. And she was more trusting than she has now. She's learned her lesson.

Mandy Matney 23:20

Remember up until last year, Stephen's case had gone cold at the South Carolina Highway Patrol where they were investigating his death as a hit and run. No one in law enforcement had been paying attention



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to Sandy's pleas for help until last summer. So when these guys came around it gave Sandy some hope, but turns out they weren't trying to help her at all. In fact, that was the end of them. They disappeared when fled took over the case. Last summer, they had to get a warrant and went to those two private investigators to retrieve the iPad because it could have contained evidence in Stephen's case. In the meantime, the two private investigators refused to say who was paying them. In the Wall Street Journal this weekend, Greg Parker finally admitted to hiring those two private investigators as a part of what he called his news gathering effort. Parker's legal team began using that term to describe the work being done for them by investigators and marketing companies, because likely they wanted to try their hand at the reporter shield law and see if it would protect them from having to divulge information related to the quote news gathering process. Yes, the same group of people who just two weeks ago were trying to backdoor their way into obtaining messages from actual news gatherers are the ones who did this and I hope fled is looking into the possibility of criminal charges here because if a quote won't news gather had done something like this? There's no doubt in my mind, we would be in serious trouble. And again, think about all the steps Greg Parker has taken all the money he has spent all the staff he is fired and hired on his quest to avoid paying the Beaches for Mallory's wrongful death. It's irrational it just because Greg Parker isn't the worst villain in the story does not mean that he gets to escape accountability. And we'll be right back. Now, let's talk about Greg Parker and his quest to avoid accountability.



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Liz Farrell 25:45

So first, like Mandy, I have a quick note about the Wall Street Journal story. Before it was published around midnight Friday evening, we had heard that it was going to contain some bombshells which excited me personally because of how much we've written about Greg Parker and the accusations against him in this civil conspiracy case. I'm not an I told you so person generally, but it will bring me great personal satisfaction to share that story with those anonymous social media accounts that seem to want to paint the Beach family, their attorney and Mandy and me as if we're the villains in this we are not the villains. My excitement over this story was short lived, though, because as Mandy mentioned earlier, much like every other mainstream news story out there, the Journal did this thing that really frustrates us both. It gave every fact in the story equal weights, it neutralized the information and basically threw everything at the reader like here, all the people involved in this case are basically great. They're just doing their thing. No one is right. No one is wrong. Enjoy. I'm still kind of working through my feelings on what journalism was, is and should be. I absolutely recognize the need for objectivity. But I think society is better served by journalists who believe and being objective to the truth rather than being beholden to the subjects of the story, meaning journalists who understand that in cases like these, where the powerful are accused of harming the less powerful there is a hierarchy of facts and a strong need for perspective, every step of the way, reporters should be fair about their portrayals, of course, but they need to stop making balanced the goal. Placing pennies on each side of the scale, so that it will balance out perfectly by the end is not a virtue when it comes to serious issues that affect people's lives. The truth is rarely split down the middle. So journalists

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should stop treating it that way. And they need to stop fooling themselves that balancing the scales makes them less biased. Everyone has biases, everyone. So it's up to journalists, to be honest about there's both me and D and I have this one quote We love that we saw on Twitter once about how a journalist job is not to give readers information from quote both sides about whether it's raining outside, but rather to look out the window themselves and tell us whether it's raining as such, like Mandy said the story was basically a profile of a businessman simply protecting his business to the fullest extent possible while trying to change tort law in alcohol related cases. If you read the hundreds of comments on the story, you'll know that they all sound like this All hail the man who was making the money here's what was missing the story of a man so intent on escaping accountability for any future alcohol sales to minors that he's willing to go scorched earth on everyone who comes his way. Incidentally, it's also the story of a man who likes to take really bad advice from people who have no business giving advice. The Wall Street Journal story was also problematic because it painted the Beaches attorney Mark Tinsley, like he's some unhinged hick have agreed monster out to take down Parker for funsies just so he can get paid. Here's a sample of that.

DAVID MOSES 28:55

Mr. Tinsley, a personal injury lawyer in Allendale, South Carolina said he wants to take Mr. Parker quote for everything he's got and quote because the case has become personal. Mr. Tinsley said he is offended by the lengths to which Mr. Parker's team has gone in the continuing investigation which has made an excruciating situation for the Beach's



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even worse, quote, I can prove everything he did. And I'm going to he's going to write me a big check and quote, Mr. Tinsley said.

Liz Farrell 29:25

You don't have to know Mark well, or even for that long to know how much the Beach family means to him how much of their pain he carries around with him to help lighten their load as much as possible and how angry he was to find out about Vicki Ward sizzle reel because it was a cruelty beyond any he could imagine.

Mandy Matney 29:45

Like we told you several times before the boat crash case is ground zero for the Murdaugh murders. Paul Murdaugh basically drove his boat straight into the fortress that Alex had built around his financial crimes. Since February 24 2019, that fortress had been crumbling to the ground in in the rubble are the Murdaugh secrets which had been hidden for generations. The boat crash cases separate and apart from the Murdaughs had been really intense. The boat crash cases have exposed the ugly underbelly of South Carolina, both legally and politically. The civil conspiracy case in particular has shown us how far wealthy defendants in their attorneys are able to go in the state just by believing that the rules do not apply to them and then acting accordingly. When the rules do apply to them. They cry no fair, but the Wall Street Journal story is actually a major turning point here both inside and outside the courtroom. Obviously, as Liz mentioned, Parker's team went after the Beach family's integrity in Mark Tinsley's integrity when they suggested it was them who leaked the files. Meanwhile, they are continuing to try to have Tansley removed from both the civil conspiracy and the boat



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crash cases. But so far, they have been beaten back at every attempt. This has caused a lot of unnecessary stress for the victims. But that is the point. Parker's attorneys want the Beaches to feel stressed by these cases so that they'll drop them or they'll do anything to in them quickly. It will be interesting to see what will happen now that we know the truth about Parker's in the bow crash cases, I will let Liz tell you more about what we know about Greg Parker, Greg Roman and Vicki Ward.

Liz Farrell 31:50

I'll start by reminding everyone that Greg Parker denies leaking the materials to Vicki Ward and Vicki Ward denies paying for the materials. That said you should know that production companies people who seek to make documentaries and other televised projects, pay local consultants for their time and pay them for any photos, primary resources, databases, reports, etc. That they may have as it relates to whatever subject matter they're looking into. So while Vicki might not have paid for the material herself, it's possible the materials were in fact paid for. For a long time, we had heard that Vicki Ward had gotten the Murdaugh file from the man named Greg Roman, but we couldn't prove that nor could we figure out the connection between Roman and Greg Parker. Here's who Greg Roman is. He's a Middle East policy expert who lives in Philadelphia. He has a long career of writing about issues that involve Israel. He is the director of the Middle East Forum, which promotes America's interests in the Middle East. Everything this guy does seems to be related to the Middle East, except for one thing last summer he wrote a very long blog that he posted on his website about Paul Murdaugh, the blog contains a lot of information that had not been made public. It recently came out that long before the murders.



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Greg Parker had paid a firm to put together a report on the Murdaugh's like a dossier marked. Hensley has pointed out that entire passages from that report were present in Romans blog. Now the blog post was weird. From the beginning, Roman claimed to have been vacationing on Hilton Head when he came across the story about a 2019 boat crash. But here's the thing. This was 2020. The boat crash was no longer in the headlines. And at that point, I think Mandy had only written about it four or five times since being at FITS News. There was no movement at the court level because of COVID. And generally, it just wasn't a story that most people thought about anymore, other than locals and Mandy and me who were often accused of becoming obsessed with it. So how did a Taurus become interested in a crash that happened a year and a half earlier? And 45 minutes away from Hilton Head that involve kids who lived about an hour and 30 minutes from Hilton Head? I mean, it can happen Sure. But also how did that tourists know about Paul's blood alcohol content? How did he know about an affidavit from a quote close Murdaugh family associate claiming Buster was gay an affidavit that has never been publicly filed in this case, which means if it truly does exist, that it came from the lawyers, there were so many little pieces that Mandy and I were like, hang on a minute here.

Mandy Matney 34:20

I mean, it seems so obvious that we now know the origin of Greg Romans blog post, but honestly, we didn't give it much thought at the time, at least not consistently. When Vicki Ward came on the scene. His name came up again, but there was just so much going on at the time that we had to put it on the back burner.



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Liz Farrell 34:40

In June, Vicky Ward's three part documentary aired on Investigation Discovery, and who should we see on it but Mr. Middle East policy himself Greg Roman, not only is he an unusually perceptive, curious and resourceful tourist with an apparently uncanny ability to get locals to open up to him about the Murdaugh's and get law enforcement officers from the Department of Natural Resources to open their case files for him. He is a producer of Murdaugh documentaries, Greg Roman was listed as a producer of the documentary and even appeared on the program as a Murdaugh expert. My goodness, right, that seemed to confirm our suspicions about Roman giving Vicky Ward whatever files he had had to help him with his blog entry, which clearly had included photos of Mallory's dead body. But how did Roman know Parker how to get those documents? I guess we should have just asked Greg Parker, the man who denied having any role in those files being released. So here's where Parker might have shot himself in the foot by admitting that he hired Greg Roman he's basically admitting to either causing or being the conduit to hell Roman got whatever files he had, but he's saying that his service contract with Roman had concluded at the time of the blog, and at the time, Vicki Ward got the documents so case closed, nothing to see here. Once again, Greg Parker has put himself in the line of fire for thoughtlessly giving someone a product that they then use recklessly to harm others seems like a pattern right.

Mandy Matney 36:17

I want to pause for a minute here and point out that the Wall Street Journal on ironically referred to Greg Roman as an investigative journalist, which is what I was talking about earlier, the man and posted



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a personal essay about the Murdaughs on his personal blog. It's another small detail that might not mean much outside of the reporter circles. But it's important because words matter how a writer decides to characterize someone can either validate or invalidate them. They choose the colors they paint with, by calling me a blogger. That reporter was telling the reader Hey, this is a casual and unserious person covering this with no real adherence to journalistic pillars. So take what she's written with a grain of salt by calling Roman an investigative journalists. And again, it looks like he was paid by Greg Parker to write what he did. Valerie is giving him clout and saying he's the man who looked into this he is someone who has considered all the angles and has rolled up his sleeves and dug deep when in reality, it looks like he is a man who was paid by a person with special interest and he investigated curated information that was handed to him. It is infuriating to see these things play out the way that they do.

Liz Farrell 37:48

I want to emphasize something Mandy just said, according to Mark Tinsley, the file room and had been given appears to have only included information that Parker's team would have wanted him to have meaning whoever gave him that file seemed to have held back on all the information from the confidential court materials that wouldn't reflect too kindly on Parker's Tinsley believes they held back things that quote unquote investigative journalists would have been chomping at the bit for such as surveillance footage from the hospital the night of the crash. The documentary, for instance, only used a still photo from the hospital surveillance that Tinsley had marked as evidence, why would they hold back on including that video in the file, likely because



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the hospital had handed it over with the agreement that it would only be used under very specific circumstances. So what does all this mean? It means that Parker's team seems to have very purposely included the photos of Mallory's body in whatever file Roman got, and then ostensibly shared it with Vicki Ward. Why would they do that?

Mandy Matney 38:49

That's the question, right? Why would they want photos of Mallory's body out there? What was the plan there? In the Wall Street Journal piece, Greg Parker proudly admitted to hiring private investigators and so called private investigative reporters to help him fight his case, saying that anyone in his shoes would do the same. No one is saying he shouldn't defend himself. But again, how does knowing whether Buster Murdaugh is gay held Parker's in the book crash case? How would a blog entry about how awful the Murdaughs are held in the courtroom? They wouldn't. Parker wasn't doing these things to defend himself. He was doing them in an attempt to sway public opinion ahead of the trial and to bully the victims to back down. Vicki Ward did not have to use that photo. It didn't illustrate any point that she was making about the Murdaugh's. We all know how Mallory died. It was used for the shock value to grab attention. Even if that wasn't the plan, Parker seems to have a big problem understanding that just because he doesn't want the rules to apply to him does not mean that he gets to play dirty.

Liz Farrell 40:13

One of the major factors that's been brought up in the boat crash case is that in addition to poorly training its cashiers and disregarding its own policies, Parkers is accused of prioritizing the speed of sales over all



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else in the journal the reporter writes about this. She points out that the Beach's believed that the pressure of turning over transactions quickly means that cashiers are more prone to making errors and alcohol sales. As an answer to that the reporter wrote that Parker says he has never reprimanded anyone for speed of transaction. Is that true? Did she fact check that? Is she sure that no cashier has ever been reprimanded for taking their time also, we need to talk about this some parkour stores are starting to introduce self checkout stations. One thing that has gotten lost in all of this is that the Beach's have been very clear about the mission here. They know money will not bring them happiness, and they know it will not bring back Mallory, but they also know money is what Greg Parker values they know that being required to pay punitive damages is what might actually motivate him to change. All they originally wanted in this was for Parker to acknowledge his store's role in Mallory's death and to fix the problem. Before Mallory's death Parker settled another fatal crash in Beaufort County that occurred after alcohol was sold to an obviously inebriated person. According to court documents. Even though Parker's admitted to training failures on its part when it came to preventing illegal sales of alcohol. The stores in house counsel also indicated that they didn't plan on fixing that, according to court documents, the Beach is when it fixed and frankly, it seems like it would have been a whole lot cheaper and a whole lot more honorable if Parker had done that instead of spending millions of dollars on gathering dirt on people. We'll be right back.

Mandy Matney 42:11

As hard as this is to believe this second major admission from great Parker in the Wall Street Journal is even more infuriating and more

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disgusting. It's one of those things that angers you the more that you think about it, Parker admitted to hiring two private investigators. And frankly, I am shocked he would admit to doing something so heinous, even though for Tati and risotto told Sandy Smith, they were there to investigate Stephen's death and 2020. We now know that that's not at all what they plan to do. According to court filings. It was their mission with Sandy to find evidence to prove that Buster Murdaugh and Stephen had an intimate relationship. Again, this is not information that would have been relevant to the boat crash case at all. But according to sources, Parker's team believed that by making that connection between Buster and Stephen, they might be able to sway public opinion on him and therefore lessen Parker's burden of liability. Buster Murdaugh is a defendant in the boat crash case and stands accused of knowingly letting Paul use his license to get alcohol. So again, it looks like Parker was using his power to create a public smear campaign about someone's alleged sexuality, which has nothing to do with the case and is so vile when you really think about it. Here is Sandy Smith's Attorney Mike Hamlet.

Mike Hemlepp 43:55

Well, I don't want to presume to speak for Sandy. You know, she and I have enjoyed the kind of relationship where we see eye to eye on almost everything, but I don't know that I want to speak for her. But the general sense that I have and I think she would share this is it's a little infuriating, because the idea that some rich guy who is completely unrelated to Stephens case, inserts himself into the investigation for some self serving reason, which I can only assume it's a self serving resigning, there's no in the Wall Street Journal article, he indicated that



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he was looking into all the different things that were alleged to be part of the Murdaughs and Stephens death has only been alleged to be have any connection to that. The fact that he would insert himself and use Stephens case, which is first of all, tragic and second of all, horrific to use this for some sort of gain or advantage in a lawsuit or are in a political campaign in the legislature to affect the laws of South Carolina. That's kind of disgusting. It's gross. I mean, you inserted yourself in this investigation for literally no good reason. I'm I'm, I think it's Chris.

Mandy Matney 45:16

What is seriously deranged about what Parker's team did here is that no one at the state level was listening to Sandy. She was begging anyone for help with her son's cold case, and she was getting nowhere.

Mike Hemlepp 45:31

I don't know that I can say that these gentlemen lied to her. But it was certainly subterfuge, I mean, without question and use it to gain access to information about Steven and his private life and his his private affairs. And they were able to do this because from the early days in 2015, from the early days in the investigation, there was conflicting stories from public officials about how died. There was conflicting stories about the injuries on his body. There was conflicting stories. Of course, there were speculation everywhere. And it seems like no public official could give her any relief could give her any solid ground to stand on. She reached out to she's reached out to you ladies good. She wrote Nikki Haley, the governor, she wrote the FBI, she was looking for anybody to come in and help her as the mother of what we now believe to be a murder victim. So here these two people show up and say, Hey,



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we're private investigators, we're here to help you. We can't tell you who it is because, you know, confidentiality, but we're here to help you. Well, of course, you were exempted.

Mandy Matney 46:43

Sandy gave these to private investigators hired by Parker Stephens iPad, which at the time was rumored to have contained evidence of texts between Steven and Buster. It's not enough that they took the iPad with no apparent intention of helping Sandy, they didn't give it back without a search warrant.

Mike Hemlepp 47:07

So gently they took this, whatever they did with it, who knows and amassed a body of information? Have they provided that to us? And they reached out to us on that? No, I've never heard from any of these people. Have they reached out the SLED? SLED got some of it with a search warrant, because they didn't want to cooperate with SLED. And I don't know what they have. I don't know what they have, they need to come forward. They need to come forward, like right now. And they need to provide me with everything that they have about Stephen's best case, I have not hired to do anything with this boat limitation I have nothing to do with this litigation. I am not interested in anything that they have related to that. They are welcome to everything that they have on that. And they can have their day in court. And in the same way that I am not interested in their litigation, they need to get out of ours. This is a murder investigation. And they need to provide me with everything that they have.



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Mandy Matney 47:59

This shocking revelation from great Parker presents a new challenge for Mike and Sandy as they seek to get answers about the extent of photography and result of so called investigation.

Mike Hemlepp 48:14

We are tossing around a few ideas, and we're thinking about how to best take action on this. One of the things that we have been very clear about from the very beginning, since ever since I've been involved, for sure. And Sandy way longer than that is that Sandy and I have the entire family and I have a singular goal. And that is whoever killed Steven should go to prison. If we find out that people had manipulated the evidence, people were involved in secreting information. So people should be held accountable to if these investigators have any information with regards to any of that. It's not helpful to them. It doesn't help at all. There's no reason why he shouldn't turn it over. If they don't want to turn it over to me they can turn it over to SLED.

Mandy Matney 49:07

Make no mistake, they will be pressing ahead and they will be getting answers.

Liz Farrell 49:20

Another thing we want to update you on is the boat crash itself. Last week Judge Daniel Hall agreed to Alex Murdaugh's request to postpone the trial until after his murder trial. The boat crash trial was set to start in early October. Obviously that would be rather problematic for Alex because a major component of the boat crash would deal with his



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parenting of paw and it would put the public behind closed doors where they could get a nice close look at Alex's life. The danger of the boat crash case for Alex Murdaugh has always been that it would air his and his family's dirty laundry and clearly he's not done emptying out his nasty little hamper. So it's understandable why his defense would argue for this, but it's also frustrating because the Beaches have hung in there for three years already, and you can see everything they've had to put up with in the interim. I know this sounds bizarre to say, but why should they have to wait just because he's been accused of murder. Since Alex is requesting a speedy trial, I think there will be even more pressure on Dick and Jim to make that actually happen. In a way this is Judge Hall calling their bluff. His decision is a temporary reprieve for Alex. If they put off his murder trial past January, and there's no reason to think they want at this point, Dick and Jim are going to have to contend with the Beach family going back to Judge Hall and saying, well, like we said, this is all one big tactic, Dick and Jim's request for a speedy trial might actually be one of those smart chess moves we kept hearing about.

Mandy Matney 50:51

So let's look at the biggest picture of all in the Beach case. In the civil conspiracy case. The Beaches are basically asking for accountability. They are saying Greg Parker conspired with others to intentionally inflict emotional harm upon them all in an effort to affect the outcome in the wrongful death case. In response, Parker and his team doubled down and then tripled down. Parker's ruthlessness in this case might all be designed for one thing to make the Beach's and other victims so scared of what quadruple down might look like. I have no doubt that the Beach's no this is the game here. And I'm sorry that they have to



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fight this fight. I'm so sorry for what they've had to deal with since February 24th 2019. Within the Murdaugh case, there are so many villains who are easy to identify. But not all of these evil doers are obvious. As these cases continue to twist and move forward. We will continue to drag these vampires into the sunlight and show the world who the true villains really are. The Murdaugh Murders Podcast is created by me, Mandy Matney, and my fiance David Moses. Our executive editor is Liz Farrell.

DAVID MOSES 52:30

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PODCAST