



EPISODE 67: MMP Live from Charleston: Bombshells and Breakdowns in The Russell Laffitte Trial

[00:00:00] **Mandy Matney:** I don't know how long we're going to be in Charleston covering the Russell Laffitte trial. But so far, the first federal trial related to crimes we've discussed in this podcast has been explosive and revealing. We have a lot to unpack already. My name is Mandy Matney. I have been investigating the Murdaugh family for nearly four years now. This is a special edition of the Murdaugh Murders Podcast, produced by my husband, David Moses and written by Liz Farrell.

[00:00:51] I know I usually say we have a lot to unpack. But man, this week we have a lot to get to. Also, by the way, we're in downtown Charleston and there's a lot of noise going on around us, and we're trying to do this really fast, so just bear with us. I wanna start out by saying with Russell's trial this week in our completely chaotic schedule, we're going to do the podcast a little different. So let's get into it. For starters, Liz and I will give a little recap of the last crazy week. On Thursday, HBO Max dropped its Murdaugh documentary, which we all agree was worth watching, but we're also glad that we did not participate for reasons that we discuss in last week's Cup of Justice.

[00:01:36] **Liz Farrell:** On Friday, Russell Laffitte's cousin, who also calls herself an investigative journalist, dropped a very strange YouTube video where she interviewed Russell outside of an old abandoned farmhouse about his side of the story just four days before his federal trial began, which was deranged.

[00:01:55] **Mandy Matney:** So both of those developments created a lot of chatter among those who are close to the case, and there is a lot more to discuss there. But we're going to save them for Cup of Justice later on this week.

[00:02:08] **Liz Farrell:** And then this week, the Russell Laffitte federal trial kicked off. And like everything else in this case, it's been predictably unpredictable so far with moments of absurdity.



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[00:02:20] **Mandy Matney:** And the absolute highlight was in Emily Limehouse's opening statement when she said that a lawyer at PMPED had confronted Alex Murdaugh about missing attorney fees on June 7th 2021. That is not just a big deal. It opens up a whole different box of questions that we have for PMPED and about the double homicide investigation, which we will get to in this episode. So, yeah. There's a lot to unpack. Let's start with setting the scene of Russell's federal hearing.

[00:03:02] **Liz Farrell:** The first thing to know is what Russell is charged with and what he is not charged with. We've talked a lot about the loans he and Alex took from Hannah Plyler's accounts, but Russell isn't actually facing charges for that. In fact, on Monday, Assistant US Attorney Emily Limehouse told the court that those loans were improper but not illegal. And that was a little weird to hear because this entire time, we've been hearing from the government about how Russell took those loans out without the permission of the probate court, so we're not sure what changed there. Russell is being charged with how those loans were paid back, which is with money that Alex allegedly stole from Arthur Badger, Hakeem Pinckney, the estate of Donna Badger, and Natasha Thomas. The government says Russell knew the money he was putting toward those loans had been stolen. Russell is also being charged with playing fast and loose with lending laws. All told, he faces up to 180 years in federal prison for these charges.

[00:04:08] **Mandy Matney:** On Monday, we got a big taste of the defense's strategy: pointing fingers at everybody else involved in this big Murdaugh mess, including Bank of America and PMPED. But Judge Gergel was not having this. At least, he didn't appear to on Monday. He was clear in his example. He said if two dudes were drag racing going the same speed and one got pulled over, the one who was pulled over could not argue that he's innocent just because the other guy who was also speeding got away, too. Judge Gergel clearly said, "I don't want my courtroom turning into a circus," meaning he wants every witness to be completely relevant to the current charges. To this, the defense argued that the law firm is at the center of this storm. Now, the law firm, in my opinion, is at the center of this storm. Bart Daniel, Russ' attorney was right about that. But one of our biggest questions heading into this case is, how much will be revealed about the law firm's alleged roles in Alex's crimes? How much did they know and when?



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[00:05:27] **Liz Farrell:** Remember that. Two other issues that were dealt with in the pretrial hearing were the Harris Report and the question of Alex Murdaugh testifying on Russell's behalf. We talked about the Harris Report in the last episode of Cup of Justice. It was a report put together by a lawyer for Palmetto State Bank to assess the bank's liability in the Satterfield case. According to Russell, there were elements of this report that exonerated him, but Judge Gergel said "no." Gergel strikes us as very fair and particularly concerned about making sure Russell has a fair trial, so the only conclusion there is that the Harris Report wasn't as exonerating as Russell made it out to be. As to Alex, he will not be making an appearance in the court on Russell's behalf because he said he would plead the Fifth to every question. The judge was like, yeah, no. We're not bringing him in here for that. So, Tuesday was the official beginning of the trial. Media wasn't allowed to cover jury selection, so after we got booted from the courtroom, Mandy and I had a little *I Love Lucy* moment when we decided to take the stairs to the media room and got trapped in the creepy stairway of the federal courthouse for a minute because trial coverage is stressful, you guys.

[00:06:43] **Mandy Matney:** We were shocked at how fast they did jury selection. Judge Gergel was clear that this case was different, and we will talk about jury selection in a later Cup of Justice episode. So within a couple hours, they chose the jury. And by Tuesday afternoon, Assistant US Attorney Emily Limehouse stood in front of the jury and delivered the government's opening statement. In summary, Emily focused her statement on absolute power and corruption, saying absolute power corrupts absolutely. She told the jury how Russell allegedly used his position and power at the bank, not only to help Alex Murdaugh steal millions of dollars, but in the summer of 2021 as Murdaugh's life was clearly unraveling, she alleged that he helped the now accused killer of covering up his financial crimes by giving him unsecured loans. She explained to the jury the large pile of evidence stacked up against Russell that will be presented in court. And she said that throughout the trial, we will hear from several compelling witnesses to testify against Russell, including members of the bank, lawyers at PMPED, and victims, such as Natasha Thomas and Alania Plyler. About halfway through Emily's statement, she dropped a bombshell. She said that a PMPED lawyer confronted Alex Murdaugh about missing attorney fees on June 7th 2021. And she was specific, saying that this was on the day of the murders of Maggie and Paul



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Murdaugh. I have to say this again because that is a big deal. It could be a big piece of the puzzle that we've all been missing.

[00:08:37] So let's unpack this one piece by piece. Let's go back in time and talk about everything that we have reported on PMPED about what they knew and what they said at the time because this is quite the conundrum. So in January 2022, Liz reported on this podcast that sometime in May 2021, PMPED had discovered something that led them to believe that there were big financial problems when it came to Alex. At some point after that, the firm hired a forensic accountant from Columbia to take a deeper dive. I have to say this. Liz got a lot of flak from trolls online while reporting this information. They claimed that she was making things up to get a juicy story and create a potential motive for Maggie and Paul's murders. I have to point that out because we are still trying to figure out how this pack of online trolls fits into this big old mess. But lo and behold, Liz's reporting was accurate, and she has been vindicated by the public record several times, actually. The first time was when Alex was disbarred. The Supreme Court released a report of the charges against him. And in that report, there it was. On May 19th 2021, a paralegal from PMPED had contacted Chris Wilson about the \$792,000 in missing attorney fees from a case that Chris had worked on with Alex. And by the way, Chris had to pay that money to PMPED and Alex never fully paid Chris back for that. Anyway, this means that PMPED has apparently at least known about this since May 19th 2021, that Alex wasn't doing things by the book when it came to money. Here's how that went down, according to the Supreme Court of South Carolina, and we will have David read that bit.

[00:10:43] **David Moses:** On May 19th 2021, after receiving litigation cost checks, a paralegal from PMPED contacted attorney Chris W. staff to inquire about the corresponding disbursement sheet and the missing attorney's fees. Attorney Chris W. staff member informed PMPED's paralegal that a check for the attorney's fees had been provided to respondent. A partner from PMPED then contacted attorney Chris W. to inquire about the status of the attorney's fees and indicated that PMPED was not aware of and had not authorized a direct disbursement of fees to respondent.

[00:11:24] **Liz Farrell:** Okay. You got that last part, right? Now, think about this. If your business partners found out that you arranged to have a nearly million dollar payment that was meant to go to the business be paid to you instead,



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tell me how fast you'd have handcuffs on your wrist. PMPED found out that Alex was trying to steal from them on May 19th 2021, according to the charging document that led to Alex's disbarment. And then, the partners confronted him on June 7th 2021, according to Limehouse's statement on Tuesday. Okay, now back to Chris Wilson. Chris is another one of Alex's friends and he's the man Jim Griffin has claimed is a part of Alex's alibi. Because when Alex left Moselle for his mom's house the night of the murders, he apparently called Chris Wilson. And then, when he left his mom's house to go back to Moselle, he apparently called Chris again. When Alex's calls to Chris were first reported, we heard a lot of jokes about men and their friendships. Because why would Alex call Chris twice for two 20-minute conversations in the span of an hour? Was he calling Chris to act all casual and like he had not just murdered two family members, allegedly? Or was Alex calling Chris Wilson the night of the murders because he was trying to find out what Chris had told PMPED? Was he trying to explain to Chris that the check thing was just a big misunderstanding? The timing of this is a big deal.

[00:12:55] Now, don't forget. In the spring of 2021 sometime in early April or late March, the State Grand Jury had subpoenaed for Alex Murdaugh's financial records as part of their investigation into the obstruction of justice boat crash case. Anyone who watched the HBO Max documentary series, the footage from those hospital security cameras captured some of that alleged obstruction by the Murdaughs. This is all just to say that leading up to the double homicide on June 7th 2021, it appears like PMPED had clear knowledge that something really wrong was going on with Alex and his finances. According to the Supreme Court charging documents, it looks like Alex was stealing or attempting to steal from his partners. On June 8th, PMPED released the following statement that came off as odd to a lot of people at the time.

[00:13:49] **David Moses:** The Murdaugh family and PMPED wish to thank everyone for their many calls and condolences in the aftermath in the deaths of Maggie and Paul Murdaugh. We ask for your continued patience and prayers through this tragic time.

[00:14:05] **Mandy Matney:** Why "patience"? And why weren't they demanding justice for Maggie and Paul Murdaugh at the time? And then the big questions here. Before we get into the other shenanigans following that



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summer, did PMPED partners report the missing fees to the ODC in May as they are apparently obligated to do so as attorneys? Did PMPED partners report this very important information to SLED immediately? Because according to my sources, SLED didn't know about the financial crimes until the shooting in September. And it seems like investigators would have wanted to note that on the day of the murders, the husband had been confronted about major financial problems by his own law partners. Another question: did PMPED partners report what they knew about Alex's missing attorney fees to the 14th Circuit Solicitor's Office where Alex was employed as a volunteer solicitor? And if the Solicitor's Office knew about those missing fees in May, why didn't they suspend Alex immediately? And why didn't PMPED fire Alex at the time that they confronted him? Or did they secretly fire him and not say anything at all?

[00:15:29] These are really important questions, not only for investigators to be asking, but also for civil attorneys representing Alex's former clients to be asking. Because let's talk about the incentive PMPED might have had to keep this hidden, if they kept it hidden, which we don't know for sure that they did. First, there's the financial incentive. Alex, as it turned out, was a big liability for them. Second, there's Randolph Murdaugh, who was still alive on May 19th 2021. Did this make Alex, who was already protected by his forefathers, untouchable? Third, having a partner with a 14th Circuit Solicitor badge was probably a nice feature for the firm. We can't forget that. And fourth is social climate and reputation. The revelation that Alex Murdaugh tried to steal more than \$700,000 from PMPED would have changed the ecosystem a lot in Hampton County. So in the summer of 2021, Alex did not keep a low profile at all.

[00:16:49] And I have to mention all of this because it's really important when we talk about context here. Alex was spotted at numerous events around the Lowcountry and in Key West, partying it up with his friends and having a good old time in the weeks after the murders. But he did something last summer that I always thought was odd. He filed a lawsuit on behalf of a South Carolina teenager who was injured badly in a boat crash. Yes. He filed a lawsuit about a different but kind of similar boat crash to the one that his murdered son was accused in; the boat crash that changed everything for the Murdaugh family. But what's important here is that at the bottom of that lawsuit Alex filed in July of 2021, it states the name of his law firm PMPED,



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meaning after all of the apparent red flags that had come out about Alex's finances within the firm, not to mention all of the media reports tying Alex's family to multiple deaths, how was he still working for the firm? How did they not consider that to be a huge liability for them? And also, have to ask this question, did Alex only file that lawsuit so he could steal from those clients, too, because he was so far in deep red financial troubles last summer? And we'll be right back.

[00:18:37] **Liz Farrell:** Which brings us to August and September 2021. So this week in court, the first witness called to the stand was Russell's cousin, Norris Laffitte, a member of Palmetto State Bank's board, which is made up of all Laffitte family members, by the way. Remember in episode 60 when we asked if something major had happened in August 2021? The reason we asked that is because one, we had always suspected that there was some big behind-the-scenes revelation related to the double murder investigations around that time. And two, we learned of the August 9th 2021 email from Cousin Norris to Russell, asking him to put together a report on Alex's debt to the bank. Here's why he sent that email. On Tuesday afternoon in federal court, Cousin Norris testified that on July 4th, he had heard from two different sources that Alex was no longer working for PMPED. And this got Norris to be like, hm. I think that guy owes us a lot of money, and how is he going to pay it back if he isn't working? At the time, Alex actually owed the bank in excess of \$3 million. And according to Norris, Russell, Russell's dad, Charlie, and Russell's sister, Gray, kept loaning Alex money despite that money not being paid back. So first, I wanna remind you guys of Alex's attitude toward men like him getting fired. Remember this clip from the jailhouse calls? It gives us excellent insight into how Alex and his Good Ole Boy-friends are used to handling these situations in the dark.

[00:20:10] **John Marvin Murdaugh:** You know, I mean, obviously Cory's been fired. Didn't know about that, did you?

[00:20:16] **Alex Murdaugh:** Been what?

[00:20:17] **John Marvin Murdaugh:** Cory has been fired.

[00:20:19] **Alex Murdaugh:** Legitimately for real? Or just?



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[00:20:22] **Liz Farrell:** Anyway, in August, Cousin Norris had alerted the bank that there was potentially a big problem with Alex Murdaugh. According to a filing from the United States Attorney's Office, on that same day Norris sent this email to Russell, August 9th 2021, Russell seems to have had a big "uh-oh" moment. On July 15th 2021, Russell wired \$350,000 to Chris Wilson from Alex Murdaugh. That money was a loan from the bank to Alex, but no loan paperwork had been filled out at that time. When Cousin Norris sent that August 9th 2021 email, Russell, according to the federal government, looked at Alex's accounts and saw that Alex had hundreds of thousands of dollars in overdrafts. So here's what they say Russell did next. He loaned Alex another \$400,000 to cover the overdrafts, and then had a bank employee drop loan papers for \$750,000 and backdate those papers to July 15th 2021, the day he first wired money to Chris Wilson, ostensibly as part of the payoff for the fees paid directly to Alex instead of PMPED.

[00:21:37] Let's pause for a second here because I wanna make two things clear. The first is that the bank got daily reports on whose accounts went into overdraft. Russell was getting repeatedly told that Alex had spent more money than he had in his account. Again, if you or I had done this, the check would've bounced. But Russell continued to approve Alex's bad spending. The second thing is this. Johnny Parker, Alex's former law partner at PMPED and the titular head of Parker Law Group, which is the law firm formerly known as PMPED, apparently made regular big loans to Alex. According to a complaint filed by Parker against Murdaugh right before the receivership was put in place last fall, on March 5th 2021, he had loaned Alex \$150,000. On May 19th 2021, the same day that the paralegal discovered the missing fee from Chris Wilson, Johnny Parker loaned Alex another \$77,000. Then, on July 15th 2021, the same day Russell wired \$350,000 to Chris Wilson's office and the same day he had the bank employee backdate the \$750,000 loan, Johnny Parker loaned another \$250,000 to Alex. So think about this. In May 2021, Alex got \$792,000 from the PMPED fee that was paid directly to him by Chris Wilson. Then, he got another \$77,000 from Johnny Parker on that same day. That's almost a million dollars. But poof. That million dollars was gone by July 15th 2021, when Alex had to apparently borrow the \$600,000 that he actually paid Chris back for. And oh, yeah. He had nearly \$400,000 in overdrafts at that time. We ask this question a lot, but what is happening here?



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[00:23:46] **Mandy Matney:** So the \$750,000 loan from Palmetto State Bank was labeled a commercial loan, and the proceeds were supposed to be used as an investment. Russell put down that Alex was using the money to renovate the Edisto beach home, which was owned by Maggie. But according to our sources, Maggie had already finished renovating and redecorating the beach house before her death. But we don't need to tell you that for you to know that that was a lie. Russell is the one who wired Chris Wilson's law firm \$350,000 of that loan, and Russell is the one who used \$400,000 of that loan to pay off the money Alex owed the bank in overdraft fees. So he clearly knew that this money did not go to beach house renovations.

[00:24:41] Making matters worse, the Edisto beach house and the Green Swamp Hunting Club share were apparently used as collateral for that loan. And this is where the US Attorney's Office points out that the beach house wasn't even in Alex's name, so how could he use it as collateral? In the words of Norris Laffitte, "I can't take out a mortgage and use your house as collateral." And the Hunting Club share was already listed as collateral for two other loans that Alex had out from Palmetto State Bank. And another point we want to make here about that August 9th 2021 date. This just so happened to be two days before Solicitor Duffie Stone's Office suddenly and quietly recused himself from the double homicide investigation after stubbornly refusing to do so and basically saying he would only recuse himself if a conflict presented itself. So it seems like a big conflict presented itself in early August.

[00:25:52] So we have seen enough evidence to know that, clearly, Palmetto State Bank officials knew something was really wrong with Alex's finances in August 2021. And we also know that PMPED was the bank's biggest nongovernment client, and the two institutions worked hand in hand together. So I have to wonder if word got out to PMPED in August, too, that there were big problems with Alex's Palmetto State Bank accounts and, again, this would be on top of all of the other red flags telling PMPED to fire Alex throughout the summer of 2021. But apparently, they did not. Which takes us to September 2nd 2021, when PMPED claims that they first discovered a suspicious check related to the Chris Wilson settlement on the Thursday before the shooting, which suddenly prompted a super quick investigation where they suddenly discovered the Forge account scheme, which, by the way, was publicly revealed by Eric Bland just a few weeks later.



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[00:27:07] **Liz Farrell:** Here's the problem with this claim. Like we told you, the Supreme Court of South Carolina says that PMPED knew on May 19th 2021 that the Chris Wilson fee had been paid directly to Alex because PMPED told Chris Wilson that this was not authorized by them. On July 15th 2021, Alex used \$350,000 from Palmetto State Bank and \$250,000 from Johnny Parker to apparently pay back Chris Wilson for the fee that Chris Wilson had already paid back to PMPED, according to our sources. So how, we ask you, could it be possible for PMPED to discover that Chris Wilson had made that check for the fee out to Alex Murdaugh when they already had discovered this four months earlier? How? And also, you mean to tell me that on the same day in September 2021, that PMPED was like, hm. What's this check made out to Alex? They also discovered that Alex was pretending to be Forge Consulting and depositing stolen money into two accounts at Bank of America. September 2nd 2021 must have been a really big day at the office for PMPED. And we'll be right back.

[00:28:41] **Mandy Matney:** Okay. So according to PMPED, after this super swift and thorough investigation that discovered a trail of Alex's financial misdeeds, PMPED says that they immediately requested that Alex resign, which he did. And I have to say that it's pretty weird. After all of that, they still allowed him to resign and they didn't just fire him. So then, September 4th happened and creates quite the conundrum for PMPED. Alex, for whatever reason, apparently staged his own super strange suicide event, which sent this story off the rails and onto shocking headlines across the world. According to PMPED, it wasn't until after the shooting on September 4th when they alerted the sheriff's office and SLED of suspected criminal activity involving Alex Murdaugh, who, by the way, was the only publicly named person of interest in the double homicide investigation at the time.

[00:29:49] **Liz Farrell:** And we should note that when we say "alerted investigators about the stolen money," we mean that two PMPED employees, at least one of them a partner, had stopped at the scene on Old Salkehatchie Road, where investigators were collecting evidence of an attempt to kill Alex Murdaugh, at least according to what everyone was being told that day, and told investigators about the stolen money right there at the scene. Think about this. This law firm that claims to have known nothing about nothing until 48 hours before the Labor Day weekend shooting thought it was the right thing to do to go to the scene where someone had, for all they knew at



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the time, just tried to kill their friend-in-law partner — a friend-in-law partner who, for what they all seem to believe at the time, was in deep mourning about his wife and son being murdered by gang members or vigilantes. Hey, SLED. It's us, PMPED. So while you're investigating this attempted assassination on a man whose wife and son were just assassinated, you might also wanna look into him stealing from us. Oh, wait. No, no. Don't misunderstand us. We didn't try to kill him. I mean, yes, he stole from us and that made us angry, but we wouldn't call that "motive." We just thought we'd drive over here to make sure you knew this stuff.

[00:31:04] **Mandy Matney:** On September 6th, the firm released a statement that I'll have David read. It said:

[00:31:10] **David Moses:** On Friday, September 3rd 2021, Alex Murdaugh resigned from the law firm. He is no longer associated with PMPED in any manner. His resignation came after the discovery by PMPED that Alex misappropriated funds in violation of PMPED standards and policies.

[00:31:32] **Mandy Matney:** So two days later on Labor Day, *The New York Times* reported a bombshell story that said Alex Murdaugh had stolen millions from the law firm. And the law firm apparently decided to do a little tell-all with *The New York Times* about it. Liz and I always thought this was weird; that if they just discovered the problem a couple days earlier, how were they able to confirm so quickly that he, in fact, had stolen millions from them? And then, again, on Friday, September 24th, PMPED made another statement, saying that when they found out about Alex's misdeeds, they took immediate action. I'll have David read that statement.

[00:32:21] **David Moses:** We were shocked and dismayed to learn that Alex violated our principles and code of ethics. He lied and he stole from us. No member of PMPED was aware of Alex's scheme. When we learned he betrayed our trust, we requested his resignation immediately.

[00:32:43] **Liz Farrell:** Then, on October 6th, PMPED filed its lawsuit against Alex Murdaugh, claiming to be a victim of his financial crimes and, again, stating that they had just discovered this mess in September. Like we said earlier, Johnny Parker had loaned Alex money on the very day the firm caught



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the missing Chris Wilson fee and on the very day Alex was paying Chris Wilson back most, but not all of the money Chris paid to PMPED. Now, Johnny was staking his claim to that money right around the time the word "receivership" began getting tossed around behind the scenes.

[00:33:16] On Wednesday, PMPED's CFO, Jeanne Seckinger, testified for most of the day, and we learned more about PMPED's version of what happened when they claim they first discovered the missing fees. Seckinger said that after a paralegal had discovered the issue in May 2021, she told law partner, Lee Cope. They asked Alex over email where the fee was, and he insisted Chris Wilson still had it in a trust. Chris, however, wasn't getting back to the firm. When he finally did respond to their inquiries, he backed up Alex's story. A few weeks later, on June 7th 2021, Seckinger said she confronted Alex face to face for the first time. This confrontation took place in his office. Seckinger told Alex she needed proof of where the fee from Chris Wilson's case was and that the firm believed Alex was trying to hide money from the boat crash victims and that the firm wanted no part of that. In the middle of this confrontation, Alex got a phone call. He claimed the caller was delivering news that his father, Randolph Murdaugh, who was also a partner in the firm and who had protected Alex all of Alex's life had been placed on hospice care and that Alex had to go.

[00:34:34] Neither the government nor the defense asked Seckinger if she confronted Alex with another attorney, as Emily had indicated in her opening statement. Seckinger said it wasn't until September 2nd 2021, that the firm knew for sure that Alex had received that fee directly from Chris because, like we said, they found the check on his desk. However, from what it seems, Alex would've cashed that check long before September 2nd. So I guess the question we now have is, how did that physical check make it to his desk? Did Alex Murdaugh deposit a \$792,000 check over his phone? Doesn't seem likely, right?

[00:35:15] **Mandy Matney:** Taking all of this into account, Emily Limehouse's opening statement creates a huge problem for PMPED, now known as Parker Law Group, by the way, because they had a little PR problem that caused them to change their name at the beginning of this year, and I can't possibly imagine what that would be.



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[00:35:38] If this statement by Emily is true, and I say that because I would really hope that a federal prosecutor wouldn't get such an important fact wrong in her opening statement of such a big case. But also, I wanna note that it's been almost 24 hours and I don't see any statements from PMPED partners disputing that timeline. It could be a major puzzle piece behind Alex's motive for the murders, and it could open up PMPED to all sorts of liability issues. It would tell us that if Alex did kill Maggie and Paul, the financial crimes were absolutely tied to the motive behind the murders. It would confirm our suspicions that Alex knew the walls were closing in on him from all angles. And for once, his father could no longer help him with his messes. But still, if he did kill Maggie and Paul, what was the actual reason for that? Did he see some sort of financial opportunity there that would help him get out of this huge mess? We still don't know if Maggie or Paul had life insurance policies. We're told they didn't. But also, we have a hard time believing that they didn't. Insurance policies can be held overseas, and we hope that SLED and the FBI are looking into that.

[00:37:06] Then, on the other hand, nothing Alex Murdaugh has ever done has been completely rational, like when he claimed that he had Eddie Smith shoot him because he didn't know that his \$10 million life insurance policy paid out for actual real suicides. We never believed that that shooting event was about money. We think it was about public opinion and wanting sympathy and wanting the blame to be off of him and nothing more than that. And maybe that was the motive. Maybe Alex Murdaugh thought his friends at PMPED would lay off of him about the money stuff if his wife and son were murdered. Maybe he thought he would be a widower and a mourning father who would land gently in the arms of the Hampton County community and live a quiet life. But the crazy part is that it looks like, from everything that we're seeing, PMPED did lay off of Alex Murdaugh until his shooting incident made the media spotlight on them so bright that they had to do something.

[00:38:11] We hope that this PMPED attorney who Emily Limehouse mentioned in her opening statement will be testifying further about what PMPED knew early on. But that might be tricky because what does that have to do with Russell? What does it mean for Russell if PMPED confronted Alex the day of the murders? Remember Judge Gergel doesn't want to distract the jury in this case. And he's not having the "Just because another guy did bad



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things, I shouldn't be held accountable" argument go through. But whatever happens, we have a long week of trial coverage ahead of us. Be sure to follow Liz, Eric, and I on Twitter and follow the Murdaugh Murders Podcast on Facebook and Instagram for live updates of this trial. And go to our website at murdaughmurderspodcast.com to subscribe to all of these updates. Stay tuned for a special Cup of Justice episode later this week, where a whole lot more that we didn't get to. And remember, stay in the sunlight.

[00:39:46] **Outro:** The Murdaugh Murders Podcast is created and hosted by me, Mandy Matney, produced by my husband, David Moses. And Liz Farrell is our executive editor. From Luna Shark Productions.

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