



EPISODE 76: Prelude to Murdaugh Murders Trial + 'Tombstone' Friends and the Good Ole Boy Enablers

[00:00:00] **Mandy Matney:** I don't know what secrets will be revealed in the double homicide trial next week, but we expect to finally get answers to some of the biggest questions we've had throughout this investigation. And we hope that Alex Murdaugh's enablers are exposed for their alleged roles to the point where the system can no longer ignore it. My name is Mandy Matney. I have been investigating the Murdaugh family for almost four years now. This is the Murdaugh Murders Podcast written by Liz Farrell and produced by my husband David Moses.

[00:00:50] So, 575 very long days ago, we published our first episode of the Murdaugh Murders Podcast. It was 12 minutes long and took us 60 hours to make. I stumbled through every line and I had so much trouble that at times I had to record a lot of sentences word by word. The first episode opened with the basics — I don't know who killed Maggie and Paul. I don't know who killed Stephen Smith. I don't know if anyone killed Gloria Satterfield. But I think I know who killed Mallory Beach. At the time, even though the Murdaugh saga was the craziest true crime story I had ever heard of, I didn't think we had enough content for more than 10 episodes at best. But we learned that pressure breaks pipes and the more we dug into this story, the rabbit holes multiplied and the Murdaugh saga turned into something we've never seen before — five deaths allegedly tied to one family, millions of stolen dollars missing, and a handful of powerful people attached to this never-ending criminal ring. Since that first podcast, Alex Murdaugh has been charged with more than 90 counts for a wide range of crimes, from money laundering to forgery, to assisted suicide for hire to the biggest one of all, the murders of his wife and son. In the eyes of the public, Alex Murdaugh has deteriorated from a rich and powerful man who tragically lost his wife and son into a despicable human being who is capable of any evil, or at least that's how I see him now.

[00:02:39] While the murder investigation seemed to stand still in the eyes of the public for so long in 2021, we dove into Alex's actions related to the other cases. And piece by piece, we showed the world who this man is. In the boat crash investigation, we saw Alex's true colors finally start to emerge in a way



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that we could articulate on the record. Before then, all we got was background comments that alluded to Alex being sketchy or a jerk but nothing painted a clear picture. Then, we got the boat crash investigation files, which told us a lot about Alex Murdaugh. At Beaufort Memorial Hospital on the night Mallory died, hospital workers described Alex's horrific and appalling behavior. They described a man more concerned about covering up for his son's drunken mistakes than he was about the fact that a teenage girl was missing. "Don't worry about her. She's gone," Alex was heard saying as he moved from room to room in an apparent effort to not only protect his family name but all of their secrets, too. And then, through the Satterfield investigation, we saw more of Alex's true colors that kept getting darker. We learned that Alex stole millions of dollars from the family of his dead housekeeper, the woman who raised his children. And he did this after looking her boys in the eye and telling them that he would take care of them. Alex stole every dime of the settlement, even though Gloria's son was being evicted from his home and Alex knew that. If Alex had given the Satterfields just \$500,000 of that settlement, the only part available to the public, I honestly don't think that we would be preparing for a murder trial right now. I don't know if Alex would've been charged at all. And then, we kept learning more that Alex stole from the family of Hakeem Pinckney, a deaf quadriplegic man, even after his death. And then, we learned that he took money from the Plyler girls' account who were children at the time who lost their mother and brother in a horrific crash. And now, here we are — days away from the double homicide trial where Alex stands accused of arguably one of the most horrific crimes: the murders of his wife and son. And the worst part of all of this, Alex undoubtedly had help. And he did all of this while emboldened by the badge of the solicitor's office where his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather reigned at the helm of Lowcountry law enforcement for nearly a century.

[00:05:37] The other day, I was watching some national news show about the Murdaugh case and something stuck out to me. The host, after quickly explaining all of the deaths and missing millions and powerful connections to this case, stared with a blank look on his face and asked one of the talking



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heads on the show something like, "But what about this case makes people so interested?" As if the spiderwebs of crimes that have unraveled since the 2019 boat crash and the fall of a family dynasty wasn't enough to capture a worldwide audience. I've thought about this question a lot in the last couple weeks. And I think it's something that a lot of mainstream media reporters covering this case fail to understand. It was never a whodunit mystery. It was more like what did Alex get involved in that led to so much death and destruction in his own family? And also, how many powerful people were involved in this? That was the mystery. And the only real whodunit mystery I think in all of this is the Stephen Smith case because it's very clear the corruption occurred and unfortunately, we still don't know who killed Stephen or why the Murdaugh name came up as many times as it did in the investigation nor do we know what SLED found during the course of the double homicide investigation that made them reopen Stephen's case. But what makes the Murdaugh saga so interesting is not the "who" but the "how." How did these people get away with so much for so long? How did so many others look away when they knew that Alex Murdaugh was up to no good? How many lawyers, judges, and police officers compromised their own integrity to prop up this Good Ole Boy system that hurt so many people? And now that we know everything that we know, will those in power actually do the right thing to hold everyone responsible, not just a select few? That is my main concern right now. And my hope for this trial is that so much is exposed as the media shines the brightest light on South Carolina and make it so officials have no choice but to make big change and hold those who are responsible for this mess accountable. It is my hope that the AG's office one day makes it a point to say that their work on this case is far from over, even after the trial, and that they show the world that the Good Ole Boy days are over.

[00:08:29] **Liz Farrell:** I had been living in the Lowcountry for three years when Randolph Murdaugh III retired from the solicitor's office in 2006. But it wasn't until 10 years later that I started to understand what that name actually meant. Like a lot of people who live in the Hilton Head Island area, I'm not



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only not from here. I'm not a Southerner. I don't have relatives who live in the South and most of my friends here are from somewhere else. There is a tiny bubble within the 14th Circuit where the Murdaugh's influence doesn't register and that's where I resided until 2016 when a law enforcement source of mine gave me the lowdown. When this source started out as a cop in the Lowcountry, he was told don't ever let a Murdaugh do a favor for you and be careful about what favors you do for them. He told me about the envelopes of cash that got left in cops' mailboxes after tickets were dropped. He told me about the Murdaugh boys and the fights they'd get into on Hilton Head and in Beaufort. He told me how Randolph got his boys out of trouble all the time, except for once. One time, one of the Murdaugh boys had to stay in jail overnight, according to my source, and Randolph was furious, not at his son, but at the magistrate who wouldn't make a special exception for him. This source told me about the rumors of missing bodies during the Buster era of witnesses who were paid to take the stand to testify against defendants, of fixed juries and illegitimate children, and boozy parties with some of the most powerful people in the state. He told me that the Murdaughs owned half the land in South Carolina because poor clients used to pay them by transferring their property over to them back in the day. They might be the richest people in the Lowcountry, he said, but you'd never know it. They're just the nicest people, but you don't wanna get on their bad side. He told me about the times Randolph interfered with cases, causing charges to be dropped. And yet, Randolph remained a mentor of his. This is how complicated things can be down here. No one is all bad or all good, and this was true of Randolph. He was a pro-law enforcement prosecutor. And to investigators, this was important. He treated them with respect and kindness and that went a long way, at least long enough to forgive him when he let them down. This source hounded me about doing a profile on Randolph. If Randolph says no to the profile, then I should still go meet with him he said because he was such a captivating storyteller and boy, could he tell me some stories about how it was here back in the day. He thought it would help me in my role as a full-time columnist at the Island Packet. Through this source, Randolph eventually said yes to meeting with me. I put it on my list of potential writing



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topics but never got around to making it happen. I used to regret this but after considering what kind of jovial and passively apologetic column that might have come out of it at that point in time, I'm so glad there's nothing out there like that with my name on it.

[00:11:23] Sometime around 2017 or 2018, this source called me after a dinner party with the Murdaughs at a Hilton Head restaurant. This is what I learned about Alex Murdaugh and his two sons. This source told me about how loud and obnoxious Randolph's big-headed son was and how much worse his grandsons were. They call him "handsome," Liz, not "grandpa," but "handsome." It's weird, he said. The story behind this is that Randolph was asked what he'd like his grandchildren to call him and he said, "Well, no one's ever called me handsome before, so how about that?" I was told that Alex was a volunteer solicitor with Duffie Stone's office because Alex was the threat Randolph held over Duffie's head. If Duffie proved not to be right for the job, then they could always run Alex against him in the next election. The next time Alex's name came up was shortly after this dinner. This same source called me and he was deeply upset. He'd just heard from a friend in Hampton County that Randolph's grandsons had been involved in the murder of a gay kid in Hampton a few years earlier. "They left the kid in the road and it's not right," he said. Nothing's going to happen because no one in law enforcement will go against the family in Hampton County. By the time the boat crash happened, Mandy and I knew immediately that we had to push hard against the Murdaugh tide if we wanted justice to be served. We had to keep the story in the headlines. We had to call them out in the most fearless of ways. The boat crash was the beginning of the end for the Murdaughs. Mandy and I were talking about this the other day. Paul Murdaugh was very drunk the night of the boat crash. His BAC was about three times the legal limit. His alcoholic neuropathy was on full display as he morphed into his drunken alter ego Timmy. Even in the chaos, even in this drunken haze, he instinctively knew two things. One, immediately blamed someone else for the bad thing he did and two, call Randolph. Paul brazenly blamed the crash on Connor Cook, who was sitting right next to him in the ambulance and Connor Cook couldn't



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fight back because of Paul's last name. That's just how it was here. After Maggie and Paul were murdered, I had asked a friend of Randolph's whether the family had told him about the murders. It seemed to me to be the kind of horrid knowledge you might wanna spare a family member on his deathbed. But no, they had told him. My first thought on that was how selfish it was of them. Of course, they had told him. They needed his help, nevermind that he was dying and needed peace. My second reaction was perverse satisfaction. I was glad to hear that Randolph Murdaugh had died with the knowledge that his family's legacy was going down in flames and there was nothing he could do to stop it. Everything his family had reaped for generations was about to be sowed and here we are today.

[00:14:18] Like Mandy said, this murder trial is about so much more than a rich man who might have killed his own wife and son. It's about accountability in the purest sense of the word, not just for Alex, but for every single person who has played a role in the care and feeding of the Murdaugh legacy. It's like Hannah Arendt's *Banality of Evil*. Evil acts are not always perpetrated by specifically evil people. Instead, they arise of a collection of smaller decisions that in and of themselves might not be so evil per se, like looking the other way just this once, like not speaking up, saying yes to seemingly harmless favors. Everything everyone has ever done to protect a Murdaugh will be on trial next week because without that complicity, Maggie and Paul might still be alive. Without that complicity, dozens of hurting people might not have had millions stolen from them. For the past year and a half, Mandy and I have learned that putting together the Murdaugh puzzle has meant that we constantly have to start over. Like we've said before, each new fact we learn or new understanding we have means we have to return to the first stone in the path and rewalk that new route.

[00:15:30] **Mandy Matney:** And that's what we're going to do today. We're going to rewalk the route with our latest understanding of things, starting with what we know happened before the murders. On June 7th, 2021, Alex Murdaugh wanted the world to believe that his family had been targeted



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because of a boat crash that occurred over two years earlier. According to a filing from the State Attorney General's Office this past fall, within 30 seconds of the police arriving at Moselle, Alex was talking about the murders as vengeance for the crash — this after a 911 call that recorded a quiet Alex Murdaugh until the operator picked up and he launched into hysterics.

[00:16:19] **911 Operator:** Hampton County 911. What is your emergency?

[00:16:27] **Alex Murdaugh:** This is Alex Murdaugh at 4147 Moselle Road. I need the police immediately. My wife and child got shot badly.

[00:16:39] **Mandy Matney:** In other words, it sounded like he changed his tone when he thought that he was being recorded. From the very beginning, we suspected Alex might be responsible for Maggie and Paul's death either directly or indirectly. Why? Because nothing else made sense. No one in these parts would kill a Murdaugh and think that they could get away with it. That is, except for a Murdaugh. A Murdaugh could get away with it. At the time, we knew Alex was facing pressure from Mark Tinsley. We knew that Alex had told Mark that he was broke. We knew that Mark didn't believe that for a second. Why? Because Mark knew Alex. He knew how many cases Alex had brought in. He knew that if Alex was bringing in that many cases, then he was bringing in a lot of money. And if Alex didn't have that money, well then, where did it go?

[00:17:38] An interesting tidbit about Mark Tinsley. Our immediate thought on him in 2019 was that he was a shill, a Murdaugh-approved lawyer who would represent the Beach family but not go hard on the Murdaughs. From what we understand, this is also how Alex Murdaugh and Buster Murdaugh regarded Mark. But all of us were very, very wrong. And this is why we think Mark Tinsley is going to be one of the state's most important witnesses against Alex Murdaugh. Because once Alex understood that Mark wasn't going to play nice, things got bad for him. One of Mark's clients is Morgan Doughty, Paul's



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ex-girlfriend and one of Mallory Beach's best friends. For years, Morgan had a front-row seat to what went on behind the scenes with Alex and Maggie and Paul and Buster. Alex knew what Morgan had seen. He knew what she could say about his and Maggie's permissive parenting, about the many times they cleaned up Paul's drunken messes, including those involving driving both on the road and in the water. And this, well, it's a story for another time, but it's not lost on us that Morgan and another boat crash survivor and client of Mark Tinsley's, Miley Altman, were in a strange but serious car accident in January 2021 when they were hit by a pickup while driving to work at a Beaufort boutique owned by the wife of a PMPED partner. This car crash was also right after their settlement was reached with Randolph Murdaugh's estate, which is very odd.

[00:19:25] At any rate, by early June 2021, Alex had good reason to believe that a federal judge was about to release his insurance company from the obligation of covering the boat crash, which is exactly what happened a few months later. At this same time, he also knew that a state judge was likely going to order him to give Mark a list of his financial accounts, which Mark would've then subpoenaed. This would've undoubtedly led to the end of Alex's career as an attorney. This was set to happen on June 10th, 2021. In fact, on the day of the murders, Alex was apparently handwriting a list of his accounts in anticipation of this.

[00:20:17] We'll be right back.

[00:20:27] **Liz Farrell:** As the AG's Office and other sources have said, Alex's financial crimes were immediately apparent when you look at his bank records, meaning Mark Tinsley would've seen what was happening and would've been obligated to report it to law enforcement and the firm. In addition to this, we knew that Mark had warned Alex shortly before the murders that if Alex messed with the jury or tried in any way to interfere with the case, that Mark would later sue Maggie and Paul in Beaufort County



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where Alex had much less influence over the outcomes. Strange that those same two people ended up being murdered shortly after that warning.

[00:21:02] From the beginning, Mandy and I knew the boat crash played an important role in the murders, just not the role that Alex wanted everyone to believe. We have been hearing that since the crash, Paul's behavior had gotten much worse. Sometime after the murders, we learned that Alex and other members of his family were being investigated by the state grand jury for obstruction of justice in the boat crash case. It wouldn't become clear until 2022 whether Alex was aware of this investigation at the time of the murders. Turns out the state grand jury had subpoenaed for Alex's financial records at least three times in the spring of 2021, so he likely knew. Also, we had been hearing that since the crash, Paul's behavior had gotten much worse. We also learned that the weekend before the murders, the credit card Paul used — meaning his parents' credit card — had for the first time in his life been declined. It has also been reported that Maggie was embarrassed because a check she had written to a charity had bounced. As we all know, the Murdaughs were accustomed to getting their bad checks covered, so it's not clear what happened there. When we later were told by a source close to the investigation that Alex had killed Paul out of anger and Maggie over the finances, we remembered the credit card. It is entirely possible that Paul started mouthing off at his father about the declined credit card on that night at Moselle. We don't know for sure, but we're told by a source close to Paul that this would have been within his character to do so.

[00:22:32] In late 2021 and early 2022, we began to learn more about Alex's financial crimes. And we learned from a source that, even though the official story was that PMPED had discovered Alex's thefts in September 2021, it was actually much earlier than that, as in May 2021. That was a big deal, obviously, but the bigger deal, which we learned about last November at Russell Laffitte's trial was this: Earlier on the day his wife and son were murdered, Alex had been confronted by PMPED about the missing \$792,000 fee from a case he had worked on with Bamberg attorney Chris Wilson, his close friend from



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law school. And not just confronted — he was given an ultimatum. They told him they wanted proof that the money was where he said it was. Recently, we learned from a filing from the state that this wasn't the first time PMPED suspected Alex of misappropriating fees. Sometime in spring 2021, they had asked him about another case. All of these pieces when put together create a pretty clear picture that Alex was under serious pressure on June 7th, 2021. Like the AG's Office said, the walls were closing in and he was out of options. He'd already spent the \$792,000 as well as all the other money and was running out of people to ask for the money to pay back the missing fee in full. But also, Randolph was about to die and Alex likely knew he'd be getting a multi-million dollar inheritance. So, how does that reconcile?

[00:24:07] **Mandy Matney:** Well, for one, the theft of the money from PMPED would have ended his career no matter what inheritance he got from Randolph. Alex needed to find a quick solution to replace that missing money. And in the meantime, he needed a big distraction. What he needed was time. According to testimony from Ronnie Crosby, the partners left Alex alone to grieve after the murders. They didn't ask about missing money. But also, according to his testimony, the CFO Jeanne Seckinger did inquire about it. So, in the direct aftermath of the murders and perhaps despite the murders, Alex was forced to patch together a messy solution. According to testimony from the Laffitte trial, in July, Alex borrowed \$350,000 from Palmetto State Bank to send to Chris Wilson. Chris allegedly put that money into a trust account and then vouched for Alex with PMPED, meaning he lied to them, according to Ronnie Crosby. So, while Alex is supposed to be grieving, he is instead playing shill games to avoid getting caught. In the meantime, he's also giving Eddie Smith and apparently others checks to convert into cash for him. And during that same time, he allegedly went on at least one quick trip to The Bahamas. If Alex killed Maggie and Paul, it's because he chose to save himself. He needed to buy time to make things right with the law firm. With Paul out of the way, the boat crash lawsuit was all but over for the Murdaughs. With Maggie out of the way, he could keep his inheritance and spend it the way



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that he wanted to without interference from his wife. Also, let's not forget that \$5 million estate of hers.

[00:26:12] Back to what we said earlier about Paul blaming Connor and calling Randolph. Paul took after his father on that one. Now, how can someone just blame someone else for something they did and not worry about repercussions after that? They have to have law enforcement on their side on all levels. Several people in the know have remarked to us at various times that Alex in no way expected the Colleton County Sheriff's Office to call in SLED. SLED meant that there would be more accountability. SLED meant that Duffie Stone's office — the same office that was occupied by Alex's father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, and then Alex still worked for — likely wouldn't prosecute the case against him. SLED meant that the elements of the investigation were further from the Murdaugh's reach than they were accustomed to. And next week, we'll learn just how far.

[00:27:27] **Liz Farrell:** Going back to those enablers we talked about earlier. Here are some of the things we hope to get answers to or that we have concerns about.

[00:27:34] First: where are the weapons? We expect this will be a question that gets exploited by Dick and Jim, but there could be a surprise from law enforcement. Remember this past summer when SLED searched a creek near Randolph Murdaugh's house? We don't know what, if anything, they found there. We also know that a rumor among law enforcement was that the weapons were buried with Randolph. Did they explore this or was this just some gallows humor?

[00:28:00] Second: what tales will Alex's GPS tell? We already know his alibi was basically a big can of Play-Doh, something his attorneys have been able to mold into whatever shape they need as more information has come available to them. In what ways might his phone and car conflict with the



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story he told law enforcement? In what ways will technology tell on him and perhaps others?

[00:28:25] Third: we've heard that Alex had gunshot residue on him. But at what point did they bag his hands? Why is this important? Because, again, when we're talking about enablers, we're talking about the people who either treated Alex like he was any other husband who discovered his wife and son were killed or he was treated like Alex Murdaugh. And if he was treated like the latter, which we suspect he was, then how much of the evidence has been tainted by bad evidence collection? How many predictable and preventable conflicts are we going to hear about during this trial?

[00:28:57] Fourth: we ask all this because, according to a report from the blood spatter expert, Alex lifted the shirt he was wearing at the time of the murders and wiped his sweaty face with it. He's on body camera doing this. Would any other suspect be allowed to taint potential evidence this way?

[00:29:14] Fifth: speaking of the blood spatter expert, where do things stand with that? It doesn't seem like the AG's Office is as confident in that evidence as we'd expect them to be at this stage in the game. Where did they land on entering this into evidence? If it doesn't get admitted into evidence, then what does that do to the case?

[00:29:33] Sixth: what impact will Duffie Stone's presence and the presence of his goony investigators have on the evidence? Will Duffie and his investigators be called as witnesses? We obviously suspect all of this to be exploited by Duffie's old mentor Dick Harpootlian as well, especially as it relates to the collection of Maggie's phone. Then again, Maggie's phone never needed to be found for investigators to get the information off of it, which is why Duffie's presence might complicate things.



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[00:30:01] Seventh: what story will Maggie's phone tell us about why she was at Moselle that night? Like we've told you before, several sources have told us that she was lured there. Will the evidence bare that out? Was she the sole target that night? Did Paul get in the way?

[00:30:18] Eighth: will we hear anything about the Murdaugh family's behavior in the aftermath of the murders? *The Post and Courier* wrote a story about Walterboro the other day and how the upcoming trial is being received by residents there. The reporter spoke to the owner of a flower shop and he told her that he lived on Moselle. He said law enforcement had asked him for his surveillance footage but his camera had been turned off the night of the murders. He was thankful for that because he told the reporter "I could have been killed otherwise," meaning if he had had evidence to give the police, it would've been more than noticed. That's a chilling and serious thing to say. We have heard from several people that the Murdaugh brothers went looking for surveillance footage after the murders under the auspices of making sure SLED was doing their job. We'll leave it at that.

[00:31:07] And ninth: another thing we expect to hear about is the brain matter that Dick and Jim never seem to mention in any of their filings. It's this pattern of brain spatter that we were told was most telling because there was only one way he could have gotten it on him. How does that figure into the blood spatter drama?

[00:31:26] For us, it all comes down to this: would there have been this level of an investigation without pressure from the public and the media? That is a big fat no. Without the media to ask the questions, force transparency, and call people out when they don't appear to be doing their taxpayer-funded jobs to the extent that they should, you have a system that is very easy to take advantage of and that's the system the Murdaughs had been accustomed to. Then, you add people like Dick Harpootlian and his public relations ally, Amanda Loveday, to the mix. Dick is one of the few attorneys who has direct access to the SLED Chief's Office. He's one of the few attorneys who can



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wrangle the right headlines out of the media with Amanda's help. Also, we have to mention both Amanda and Dick have close connections to President Joe Biden. Amanda, former chief of staff for a pro-Biden super PAC, recently posted a photo at the White House Christmas party. Meanwhile, Dick Harpootlian is a well-known close friend of Joe Biden — like have each other's cellphone numbers kind of close. We don't wanna politicize this story, but we're pointing out that these people have power. I mean, the team behind Alex has direct connections to the White House. That cannot be overstated. Dick has power both federally and locally and his role as legislator cannot be underplayed because all of that is how you get a more-than-year long investigation without an arrest. That time lapse then allowed Dick to paint the picture of an incompetent investigation that targeted his client out of desperation and pressure when really, that time lapse was because Dick Harpootlian was Alex's attorney and investigators knew that when they charged Alex. They knew Dick's next move would likely be to expedite the trial, leaving little room for additional investigation. When Mandy and I go back and look at text messages between each other and with sources from the weeks and months after the murders, it is wild to see the directions that the Murdaugh camp tried to take us all in with changing alibis and shifting accusations, which brings us to the next big question we have about what might come out during the murder trial: what's the deal with Curtis Eddie Smith?

[00:33:44] And we'll be right back.

[00:33:51] **Mandy Matney:** Let's first talk about this motion filed by his defense attorneys last week. Eddie's attorneys, Jarrett Bouchette and Aimee Zmroczek, filed a motion to unseal and identify witnesses referenced in a search warrant that led to drug charges against Eddie. The motion in a nutshell alleges a big problem here in the South Carolina justice system and perhaps answers the question as to why so many people care about this case. The motion accuses the state of engaging in two systems of justice, two ways of conducting itself. The first way is for people like Eddie Smith — poor and at



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the mercy of the powerful. And the second way is for people like the PMPED employee mentioned in the motion. So, what happened here? Well, we learned in this motion that Judge Carmen Mullen signed a search warrant on September 7th, 2021 that ultimately resulted in Curtis Smith's arrest. And yes, that Judge Carmen Mullen — the one who recused herself from the boat crash case in 2019 and then behind the scenes just a few weeks after publicly declaring that she had a long-standing relationship with the Murdaughs and therefore it would be improper for her to preside over the case, she signed off on a highly suspicious and secret settlement, overlooking mini bread flags that gave Alex easy access to steal millions of dollars from the Satterfield family. That Carmen Mullen, the judge who was also involved in the Badger settlement where, again, Alex was able to steal more than a million dollars from his client. That Carmen Mullen, the one who was caught on a body camera attempting to orchestrate the arrest of a mentally vulnerable man in her neighborhood, even though law enforcement officers told her that they didn't have probable cause. Carmen Mullen, who is still a judge in South Carolina despite our many pleas to the South Carolina Supreme Court to investigate her. At this point, they won't even tell us that they're investigating. And to us, it looks like Mullen has learned that judges like herself are above consequence and the South Carolina Supreme Court has all but assured her of that. So, of course, Judge Mullen was the one to sign this search warrant on Eddie. And that's not even the most disturbing part. In an affidavit, SLED Officer Blake Johnson swears under oath that SLED agents received information from witnesses, quote, to be named later that Murdaugh had been involved in the use of narcotics and that he may have been receiving them from an individual named Curtis Smith. Further, Johnson claimed that it was an unnamed PMPED employee who identified Smith as a former client of the firm.

[00:37:00] So, this is insane when you really think about the timeline here. On Thursday, September 2nd, a PMPED employee apparently found the check that broke the camel's back and finally convinced partners that Alex was stealing millions of dollars. The next day, Alex was allowed to resign from



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PMPED when really, he should have been walking out in handcuffs. Saturday, September 4th, Chris Wilson finally met Alex in person to talk about the remaining \$192,000 that Alex still owed Chris for the \$792,000 in misappropriated fees. Alex didn't have the money to fully pay Chris back. Hours later on September 4th, Alex was allegedly shot on the side of Salkehatchie Road. According to Smith's motion, between Saturday and Monday, SLED interviewed Alex Murdaugh twice. And both times, he claimed that insane story that he was shot in the head by an unknown assailant who was in a newer model dark blue Chevy. And then Monday, September 6th Labor Day, Alex Murdaugh released a statement through his PR agency NP Strategy, saying that he had resigned from PMPED and he was entering rehab for drug addiction. Then, PMPED apparently leaked a story to *The New York Times* saying that Alex had misappropriated millions of dollars. Never before this day had team Murdaugh ever mentioned anything about Alex being addicted to drugs. Then, on that Tuesday, September 7th, quote, witnesses who very well could be from team Murdaugh apparently told SLED, hey, look over there. Alex is a drug addict and you need to go get his dealer. And then on that day, Carmen Mullen apparently was like, cool. Okay. Go get him. I'm just kidding. I don't know what she actually said. But still it is sketchy that she signed off on those search warrants.

[00:39:20] **Liz Farrell:** According to the filings and our reporting, SLED was suspicious of Alex's story from the get-go. SLED Found a knife nearby that appeared to be the one that slashed Alex's tires and the DNA on the knife matched Alex's. Also, video surveillance from a nearby church did not show the car he described. But what Eddie's attorneys are questioning here is why was SLED so concerned about finding Alex's drug dealer at that point? It was clear Alex was lying to them and SLED had a shooting and a double homicide to solve. So, why did they care about Alex's drug dealer? Which reminds me. On the week of September 7th, there was a lot of chatter behind the scenes that appeared to be coming from the Murdaugh camp claiming that an arrest was going to be made in the shooting. Mandy was covering the story at the time and it felt to her that team Murdaugh wanted reporters to write a



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story with unnamed sources pushing a narrative that Alex was a victim and someone else was arrested for the shooting. But something happened with that narrative between September 7th and September 13th. Alex was interviewed again with his attorneys and he presented an entirely different narrative, claiming he had staged a suicide-for-high situation with Curtis Eddie Smith, all for an insurance scam to get Buster a \$10 million life insurance policy, meaning after enough time had passed where SLED would've been able to find the evidence that countered Alex's narrative, Alex changed his story to fit that evidence. The problem: after Alex had lied to SLED several times at that point, SLED appeared to take his word for what happened and Eddie was arrested the next day for the shooting and insurance fraud. Another problem? Remember Greg Alexander, Alex's BFF, the police chief to whom Alex apparently loaned thousands of dollars right after the murders? Well, his sister-in-law, Tonya Alexander, signed the arrest warrants for Eddie because, of course, she did.

[00:41:15] Which brings me to the tombstone friends. According to the motion from Eddie's lawyers, on October 8th, 2021, SLED Agent Kelly interviewed a person employed at PMPED. The person isn't named in the motion, but we will get to that. The employee was asked about his relationship with Alex, his position at PMPED, and other relevant information. During that interview — and remember this is before Alex was arrested in Orlando, back when Alex still seemed to think his legal troubles were temporary — the employee said that Alex was, quote, big on loyalty and had several friends he called tombstone buddies. He said tombstone buddies are friends who take your secrets to the grave. Let's pause for a second here. But could Alex be more juvenile? Grown men calling each other tombstone buddies? You know who doesn't have a tombstone buddy? People who haven't done anything wrong. It's sick to me that these guys take pride in holding onto Alex's secrets. God, I hope they have had some sleepless nights because of it. Also — and this is the funniest thing I've ever said in all of this — Alex's tombstone buddy, the guy who takes secrets to the grave, is the tattletale who lets SLED know about tombstone buddies. I cannot wait to hear this guy's testimony by the way.



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Anyway, much like Alex, this employee, the one who ID-ed Eddie for SLED and narc-ed on himself and his tombstone brothers, changed his story later, likely when evidence began emerging, that something was up with him. According to the motion, in February 2022, this employee was again interviewed by SLED and admitted that he had — wait for it — not been fully truthful with them before. He, as it turns out, was also cashing checks for Alex and returning the money in envelopes the same way Eddie had been. And he had served as a personal representative for a case handled by PMPED. Quote, the employee acknowledges that this about-face didn't make him look good. Then, Mr. Tombstone McGrave face gave investigators the identity of two other tombstone buddies of Alex — a local police chief and a county fire chief. Who are these people? It's unclear. However, could the local police chief be Greg Alexander? Could the county fire chief be Greg Cook, the friend Alex had Buster do that three-way call with from jail? And could the PMPED employee be Ricky Dixon? At the time of these SLED interviews, Ricky, who is a former South Carolina Highway Patrol officer who led one of the agency's accident reconstruction teams, would have been an investigator at PMPED. In 2017, he served as a personal representative for the estate of a man named Rodell Singleton, which was being sued by a man who was represented by Randy Murdaugh. You know, Ricky's coworker at PMPED? This is very strange indeed.

[00:44:22] **Mandy Matney:** Whoever the employee is who was referred to in the search warrant, there is an inherent injustice happening there. This person admitted to lying to SLED. How is that not obstruction of justice? He admitted to cashing checks for Alex and giving him back cash just like Eddie did. How is that not money laundering? It is so hard to trust the system when you see things like this. Anyway, the point of the motion was that Eddie Smith's attorneys want to know exactly what led to the search warrant getting signed September 7th, 2021. It is a fair question because what reason would SLED have to go after Eddie at that point in time? It wasn't until almost a week later that Alex told SLED about the alleged suicide plot that Eddie allegedly was involved in. So, why would the Murdaugh team want SLED to know about Eddie Smith? Well, let's fast forward to October 2022 when Dick



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and Jim basically accused Eddie of murdering Maggie and Paul. And now, let's rewind to September 18th, 2021 when a story was published in the *New York Post* about Eddie Smith. And in the story, he apparently denied killing Maggie and Paul, which he wasn't being accused of, so why was that coming up? Here is how the story ended.

[00:46:01] "I never had a reason not to like him before, Curtis said. I understand he's in fight or flight mode and he wanted me to be the heavyweight in the water so he could fly. However, Curtis said Murdaugh should not mess with him further. I wouldn't advise him to try to set me up, Smith said. I'd strongly advise him against that."

[00:46:23] Was the Murdaugh camp trying to set Eddie up for the murders of Maggie and Paul on September 7th, 2021? We have to ask that question at this point. In two interviews with SLED, Alex maintained that he was shot by a random shooter. That's what he wanted us all to believe; that he, like his wife and son, was being targeted by a murderous stranger. By September 4th, 2021, Alex was in deep trouble. Was this him setting up Eddie to take the fall for the murders? We hope the court will unseal the warrants because when it comes to this case, transparency is the only answer. It is our only hope of ending this VIP system of justice in which those who are deemed worthy by the Good Ole Boys get to benefit.

[00:47:23] And that is it for this week. Unless there is some last-minute, super crazy drama, the next time we will talk to you guys on MMP will be after the trial has started. Tune in on Monday for our latest pretrial coverage with Eric Bland and Cup of Justice. And please subscribe to MMP Premium at mmp.supercast.com. We will be doing a live pretrial Discord chat where fans can ask Eric, Liz and I questions on Friday, January 20th. And speaking of fans, I have some really devastating news to share. As we were finishing up the podcast tonight, I learned that one of our biggest fans, Kim Mitchell, suddenly died this week. It feels weird to be sad about the death of someone you never met in person, but I really liked Kim. After every podcast, she would post these



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fun recaps that I always enjoyed reading. She was so enthusiastic and kind and curious and was one of those fans who kept momentum going when I didn't have much to give. Anyways, I just wanted to dedicate this episode in honor of Kim Mitchell. I never got to tell her how much I appreciated her. I hope that she rests easy and I hope her spirit inspires others to be kind and caring and curious. The world needs more Kim Mitchells out there. That is for sure. And on that note, stay tuned and stay in the sunlight. We'll see you next week.

[00:49:02] **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.