



EPISODE 85: The Law that Could Have Saved Mica Francis' Life + JP Miller's Attempt to Ruin His Wife's Reputation After Her Death

Mandy Matney 00:05

Hello, happy Tuesday. And I want to start this show by wishing my husband, the amazing and talented man behind everything we do at Luna Shark Productions, David Moses, a happy birthday. I've said this before, and I will say it again, David is the unsung hero of not only Luna Shark, but our family too. Luna Shark would not exist if it wasn't for David. People sometimes ask what David does at Luna Shark and I'm like, what doesn't he do? He makes the boring parts of our show exciting. He keeps payroll moving. Every week he connects us with creators from all over the world. He triple checks our facts, and a lot of times he does his own reporting, and we will talk about that later in the show. Specifically, he went to the pawn shop where Mica visited before she died. But back to David, David is the heart and soul behind Luna Shark and he keeps that heart beating and alive every day. Whenever things get hard and I want to give up and I want to run away from all of the madness. David always knows what to say to get me back in the game to fight the good fight. I don't know what I did to deserve a guy like David, but I'm so happy that he asked me out on a date all those years ago. Happy birthday, David. I love you. Since last week's trip to Myrtle Beach and attending the press conference held by Mica's family and attorney Regina B. Ward I have not been able to stop thinking about my guest list as a part of their effort to reconstruct a bill that could criminalize coercive control in South Carolina, which is a pattern of non physical domestic abuse that includes threats and harassment. Mica's lawyer and family distributed a list of allegations of abuse that were contained in Mica's personal journals in police reports, and the list of allegations is horrifying. On today's episode, we talk about Mica's list and how a coercive control law might have helped save Mica's life. We also talk about why we think getting a coercive control bill passed in

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South Carolina is going to be a real uphill battle. Also on today's episode, we talk about our experience going to Dick's Pawn Shop where Mica bought the gun the day that she died, and we talk about JP Miller's videos threat to reveal 350 plus pieces of quote unquote, evidence that he says will show Mica's family and friends what Mica actually thought of them. In my opinion, this threat reveals a lot more about JP than it does or will anyone else. Premium members get an extended episode where we talk more about our Myrtle Beach trip, and cease and desist letters, which JP Miller is handing out like candy. Let's get into it.

Liz Farrell 03:09

Cups up! How are you guys?

Eric Bland 03:12

Great. How are you?

Mandy Matney 03:13

I'm exhausted.

Eric Bland 03:15

You've been doing a lot of traveling man. Do a lot of investigative work.

Mandy Matney 03:19

I just want to be home. I am home now. So I'm happy about that. But yeah, we were in Myrtle Beach for most of last week and it was just a lot.

Liz Farrell 03:28

You stayed a lot longer than I thought you were going to. I was really alarmed when you texted me the next morning. You were still there. I've



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never been to Myrtle Beach. I should preface with that. So that was your first time right?

Eric Bland 03:42

Well, it's intoxicating. It can be intoxicating when you go.

Liz Farrell 03:45

Is that right? Okay, tell me what's so great because I loved the movie Shag growing up. I don't know if either of you guys have seen it. It was written by a guy who actually lives in Beaufort, but it was about four friends from Spartanburg who have like sat in the 60s and they find a way to lie to their parents when they're 18 to go to Myrtle Beach for like one final like hurrah weekend before they all...

Eric Bland 04:11

Yeah, it's really good. It is a true microcosm of our country. It has everything from you know bikers and young kids with tattoos and earrings to very nice elderly people that transplanted from up north it. But it has so many good restaurants, miniature golf, and great golf courses. There's so much to do. You know, I used to take the kids with Renee to North Myrtle on July 4th and Marriott has a really good facility there and a lot of sports. They had a lot of sports conventions there so Davis would get to get autographs but you can experience a full personality of life in Myrtle Beach, don't you think man?

Mandy Matney 04:56

Yeah, it was a lot bigger, like more spread out than I expected it to be. I had been there one time when I was 10 years old and because you



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know growing up in Kansas Myrtle Beach is like a place people go. I don't know why we went. But we did.

Liz Farrell 05:12

And as I think your highways connect or something, isn't it like an easier drive to get to Myrtle Beach then?

Mandy Matney 05:18

Well, we didn't drive there. I don't know why we went there. I have no idea. But as a kid it was really cool, because there's like, like Eric said, there's color. There's lots of colorful mini golf courts, so many mini golf courses. I've never seen it and I almost am thinking there might be a sham involved in the call. Well, the amount of golf courses and those big big beaches.

Eric Bland 05:43

Why? Do you think it's money laundering going on? Money laundering?

Mandy Matney 05:46

The beach junk stores freak me out, Eric, because they're like on every block. And everybody has Amazon now. Like who is going to these big beach stores. And they are huge, taking up really great properties. And I'm like, What's going on here? So those are the things that are going on in my brain when I'm in Myrtle Beach. And then obviously, the Mica Miller case, which i i We stayed for a couple days specifically because I wanted to see all of the areas that she was in to just get to know a lay of the land. I think that's really important. That was really important for Liz and I early on in the Murdaugh story to go to Hampton and just see it



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and experience it. It is one thing to talk about a place but it's another to do the drive, do the same drives just go to the same places and you got to feel it and see it for yourself.

Eric Bland 06:43

And there's something like when you're an investigative reporter or a journalist or lawyer, you have to go and feel the soil, you have to walk it, you have to understand the surroundings, you know?

Mandy Matney 06:57

Yeah, and I can see Liz's face is like, God, I have to go to Myrtle Beach. I know. You're like...it's hitting you.

Liz Farrell 07:08

Kinda. Do you know about Hilton Head like how on Hilton Head we refer to Myrtle Beach like it's always like this fear of one little decision and by town council and suddenly Hilton Head it's Myrtle Beach. So my perspective is always been at Myrtle Beach is this place that like you don't want to be you don't want to go you don't want to experience or mimic in any way and I know there was this whole controversy at one point on Hilton Head because I think Myrtle Beach had like outlawed their tents on the beach or something there was some law that happened or some ordinance rather that like they could no longer tailgate basically like having these all day tents. And so Hilton Head was worried that they were getting the spillover from people who used to go to the beach but now going to Hilton Head so that they can have the tents and then that was bringing down the quality of tourists. And honestly you did see like there was an increase of trash on the beach



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there was like there's some sort of correlation there. So that's where my head is and yes, there is that feeling.

Eric Bland 08:13

I don't think you've lived until you've done a Myrtle Beach full weekend where you you play putt putt you go to you know the landing area there and maybe go see Alabama I mean you there is literally so much you can do amusement parks and great you know good stores there's really good restaurants very very good restaurants and then of course you have the you know the diner he you know the cafeteria type of places and the breakfast you get great nothing like a hangover and then gone for a breakfast you know of bacon and eggs and everything. It's just a fun place. You know, don't knock it until you go, that's what I say.

Liz Farrell 08:54

Yeah, I don't like lab stuff and all that.

Mandy Matney 08:57

Yeah, there's a billion pancake houses there. We noticed that too. And I think it's for families that just want to fill up their kids for the day. Like that's the cheapest like IHOP.

Eric Bland 09:10

And then they have Calabash, the Calabash seafood places.

Mandy Matney 09:13

Oh my gosh, the Calabash seafood. That's another weird thing. They're like Walmarts, seafood restaurants, Liz.



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Eric Bland 09:21

Lobster claw out hanging over the road.

Mandy Matney 09:24

Yeah and like something wacky like a shark outside. Like huge, but I've never seen it like once every block and I'm like, Who is going to these ginormous I think we were there and I think season like gets really crazy. This week next week because a lot of schools are still getting out.

Eric Bland 09:47

You have senior week there, you have biker week. Then they have black Bike Week and they tried to outlaw all those and you know, it's fun. It's fun at night just to sit out in front of your hotel. We used to stay at the hotels and the beach. You know when we couldn't afford it when I was in law school and college and you just watch the cars going by it's you know you have muscle cars you have motorcycles.

Liz Farrell 10:13

So there's like a strip? Is there like a strip?

Eric Bland 10:16

A strip. Yeah.

Liz Farrell 10:18

Okay, so it's like Ocean City, Maryland a little it sounds like it sounds like what you're describing.



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Mandy Matney 10:23

It's a lot like Ocean City, Maryland. Actually, Liz. Yes, it is. Exactly.

Liz Farrell 10:27

That's done. I'm good. I'm good. I've been to the Jersey Shore. I've been to Ocean City. I'm good. Yeah, you've seen it Hampton Beach.

Eric Bland 10:33

It's more like Wildwood and in Jersey Shore and Avalon not quite like Margate or Ventnor. But yeah.

Liz Farrell 10:41

I would say Mandy like the idea of being able to understand is that that there as a reporter that is the thing that I am missing up here now is that in order to understand that moment between when Mica went from the pawn shop, or went from her apartment to ostensibly she was driving to work, and then deciding to go to the pawn shop like that really intrigues me one understanding what that looked like visually as she was driving.

Mandy Matney 11:06

Yeah, we went to the pawn shop. I don't even know if I told you this. We went to Dick's Pawn Shop. David now loves pawn shops. So now he has a new hobby and love pawn shops.

Eric Bland 11:18

Love pawn shops.



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Liz Farrell 11:20

Which we should say happy birthday to Dave.

Mandy Matney 11:23

Happy Birthday, David. Tomorrow is his birthday. To our everything.

Liz Farrell 11:27

Happy birthday, David.

Mandy Matney 11:29

We love David.

Liz Farrell 11:32

A birthday to you, to me and yours was last week. It's you have to Geminis and Renee is tomorrow. Three Geminis. Oh my gosh.

Mandy Matney 11:40

But yeah, happy birthday, so many Geminis in our little circle.

Liz Farrell 11:45

Did he get himself a birthday gift at Dick's Pawn Shop?

Mandy Matney 11:48

We wanted to. We were interested in the gun purchase situation. And so David started asking questions. I was really just...got a really eerie feeling when I entered mostly because it was Superman themed. The entire Dick's Pawn Shop is like Dick's Superman theme. And there's like this big Superman guy when you walk in, and it's on the floor and everything. And JP Miller, the pastor who we have centered our



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investigation around. He is obsessed with Superman like creepily obsessed with Superman and it was weird.

Liz Farrell 12:26

Superman or Spiderman. Like our bowl of Marvel.

Mandy Matney 12:29

I don't really know.

Liz Farrell 12:31

I don't know the difference between Marvel and DC comics like a comic Superman type character.

Mandy Matney 12:35

I'll just go with that. He's really into that. And yeah, Superman...Spider people are gonna just be like, what is wrong with you?

Eric Bland 12:47

I'm a Superman and Batman. I have the Seinfeld. I have the Seinfeld Superman the one that you know where he stands like this. You see it in every Seinfeld episode. They always show the Superman in the Cheerio box and but I'm not wild about it. But I am a Superman and Batman aficionado.

Mandy Matney 13:06

This guy is like it's another level and it's very weird, but I was creeped out by the amount of superhero stuff.



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Liz Farrell 13:12

Like for sale or like they're decorating with it?

Mandy Matney 13:16

It's the theme. Yeah, it's the theme of the pawn shop.

Eric Bland 13:21

That's strange. Yeah.

Mandy Matney 13:22

And it's a chain of pawn shops. Like there are several Dick's Pawn Shops and you see when you go to Myrtle Beach, there are signs for it everywhere. I just kept seeing billboards that related to Mica I kept seeing her attorney. I saw several billboards of her attorney Regina Ward, that was weird. I kept seeing Dick's Pawn Shop billboards and billboards for where she worked at JP Peters and like, yeah, it was just weird. Like it was just so I just kind of got a little freaked out. And David took over and started asking questions. And one thing that David asked them where they cooperative? Yeah, well, I mean, David was like, he really was considering buying a gun and I got some pink boxing gloves.

Eric Bland 14:08

And I saw my power tools. I buy my power tools from pawn shops, I love drills and saws. They have great stuff.

Liz Farrell 14:16

You love drills and saws.



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Eric Bland 14:18

Yeah, I mean, I just like that power. I'm not good at it. But I like it. You know, you'll see a nice Old Milwaukee drill and Old Milwaukee is really good and you could get it for a good price.

Mandy Matney 14:27

But I was proud of David because he did investigative reporting. He went in there and asked questions and I want him to come over here.

DAVID MOSES 14:35

I'm not dressed. Today, I'm sure I told you so. So I'm not a stranger to firearms and pawn shops etc. And we wanted to experience it. It was it was a little morose and a little dark, but it was valuable to go see the environment. And as Mandy said, we saw billboards for everything we've been talking about on the way there On the way up, and then up, you know, to route 41, and then over to lumber State Park. But in the pawn shop, and you know, I've bought firearms before. So I know the drill, you get an immediate background check, and you can either be approved, delayed or denied. And there's reasons for those things, but they call up the, you know, whoever at the Justice Department and the Justice Department is supposed to look for certain things, one of which is if you were involuntarily committed, or you know, 1013, or that's what they call it in South Carolina. And so I'm sort of talking about Berettas, and Kimbers, and firearms with this guy sort of chatting. And he says, Well, yeah, you fill out this form, and we'll call up the phone number, and we'll put in your details. And if you've been involuntarily committed, that's an immediate rejection, denial. But if you've been voluntarily committed, that's okay. That's what you should do, go get yourself help, etc. The way I phrased the question was, I'm concerned about this



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background check, because I might have a psychological experience or something like that, and how are we going to tackle that, as a purchaser, you know, and retail, he was guiding you how to fill out the form. And he said, if there's a committal, you have to get rejected, because you know, that's a serious thing. You don't, there are checks on that purchase system. And that's one of the very good ones. And you fill out a form and you have checkboxes, and they ask about substance abuse, and are you a felon? Are you a citizen, et cetera, et cetera? And then the Justice Department is supposed to double check that. And so if Mica was involuntarily committed...

Liz Farrell 16:37

Do you have to disclose that? Or is it something that they know is supposed to come up in the check?

Mandy Matney 16:41

It is a check with the FBI, and it's supposed to come up. So I am going to because she was actually involuntarily committed, right?

Liz Farrell 16:53

Yes. As far as what she has said in February is so she said in February, but I don't know prior to November 2022. Oh, she was November 2022. She was voluntarily.

Eric Bland 17:04

It sounds like the guy was shaping David into putting voluntarily instead of involuntary he was like saying, Well, you know, if you put voluntary, you will pass it kind of thing.



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Mandy Matney 17:18

He said, it should come up and the check, like there should be something within the justice department within that check. And he said, it takes between 15 minutes and three days.

Liz Farrell 17:28

So it sounds like we need to check and see what walk them on Center for Mental Health is required to report to the ATF. Right, because that's an...

Mandy Matney 17:38

That could be a major lawsuit.

Liz Farrell 17:40

I would think. Yeah.

Mandy Matney 17:42

I mean, how many lawsuits have you guys seen with the justice system where some mass shooter wasn't supposed to buy a gun? And they did? Right? Right. And so that was something that we noticed. Then we went to Lumber River State Park and drove there. We did not do the exact drive because we were low on time, but the drive she went to a very random gas station that was not on the way and there's like so many gas stations in between there and Lumber on the direct route.

Eric Bland 18:15

So she bought the gun Mandy and went immediately to North Carolina.



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Mandy Matney 18:20

Looks like that. Yeah, she went to a gas station and then went to North Carolina.

Liz Farrell 18:25

The other thing is, she went to a gas station where to use the bathroom, you had to use a porta potty so there's so many gas stations along that route and they have clean facilities. Right and they go back to the boxing gloves and putting my hands in the other eye. I don't think I could ever stop at a gas station where there's a porta potty that well, that option.

Mandy Matney 18:46

It's like an off the beaten path gas station. It was like a country. Local own gas. It wasn't like a shell, you know, or like, and there's a million shell type stations along the way. And I noticed along the route, I saw a Regina Ward billboard and I was like, God, that's so weird. That's her. I wonder if that billboard was up when?

Liz Farrell 19:14

Well she had a divorce attorney so she hired her.

Mandy Matney 19:19

Right!

Eric Bland 19:20

Was there a recording of her buying the gun?



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Liz Farrell 19:24

Yeah, video.

Mandy Matney 19:26

There's a video.

Liz Farrell 19:28

Yeah the video of her purchasing the gun doesn't take very long.

Eric Bland 19:31

I can't imagine she had to have appeared. You know, anxious, detached, detached.

Mandy Matney 19:42

You would think, yet there was a she seemed like she was joking at one or two points. kind of laughing a little bit. She seems serious. She seemed like she knew what she wanted. I don't know if she purchased it before and was picking it up.

Liz Farrell 19:56

That's what we couldn't figure it out because she went right to the car. owner they count she had the gun within 20 or so minutes, I believe. Meaning like the whole process was done. She does have her card out.

Mandy Matney 20:08

And she very well could have been buying it for protection that day like it could have. She was under a lot of pressure. She was filing a bunch of harassment reports from her experiences with her estranged husband JP, she was very scared at that time. And there's lots of records showing



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that but what's weird is like why, why why lumber River State Park, it's a very random creepy place. There was no cell phone service for me when I was there the entire time. You know, when your phone says SOS?

Liz Farrell 20:44

Did you go in deep to the so I think the area where her body was found is that was where they're saying that there was no service. But over by the observatory there was.

Mandy Matney 20:55

I didn't have service for like, on the what, like within the radius of the park.

Eric Bland 21:01

It was just as big as the park.

Mandy Matney 21:04

That's another thing. We ran into in the time that we were there two different park rangers. And there were probably 12 people there that we saw the entire time. So seeing two park rangers for a not so big park was very strange. And I don't know if they have increased their Ranger presence since after what happened to Mica. But it was weird. The other thing was it was extremely quiet. And I feel like we were there on a Friday afternoon. And like I said, maybe 10 to 20 people that we encountered while we were there, but I'm assuming on Saturday, there's a lot more people fishing and whatnot. I can't imagine more people. I don't understand why only one guy could hear the gunshot.



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Liz Farrell 21:59

There's a question now that I saw. I'm just gonna say this, like, throughout all of the Murdaugh stuff, I really wasn't into like, the social media aspect of it, like the theories and all of that, because there was a day when we used to be able to like search for something that we wanted easily on social media related to the Murdaugh case. And then, you know, it would be filtered from all these theories of things that were happening. So I never watched like YouTube videos and things like that, like if people talking about with the Mica Miller case, I have been wanting, like looking a lot more at social media and a lot more at YouTube watching videos of people that I could never imagine caring what they think or what they're reporting, like, I hate to say that, but just saying like, I'm not, I'm just not I have other things I want to do. I don't want to watch amateurs. And I don't mean that I'm saying that with love in my heart. I'm not saying that in a mean way. But you know, surmise about like, come up with their theories. Could this be that or this and it's just like...okay...

Eric Bland 22:55

Except our listeners, except our listeners did some incredible timelines that helped me. They really helped me out.

Liz Farrell 23:08

Of course, when I'm not talking about that I'm talking about people just talking to a camera about what they think might be going on. And it's not helpful when...it's fine, it's First Amendment, like, do what you want. I'm not going to make a judgment on it. But my point being that I was watching a YouTube video about the fisherman. And so there's questions being raised about like he mentioned, the guy named



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Charles in the, like some interview that he did that he called Charles first. And then he said, I shouldn't have said his name. That's what he says in this interview. I shouldn't have said Charles's name. And people have put together they're saying that, in the Dick's Pawn Shop video, there's a man who walks in behind mic and sort of lingers, and then goes and sort of lingers to the right. And then before she's wrapping up her purchase, he's hanging out by the door and then leaves right as she Yeah. And then he's been identified as Charles and his last name. I'm not gonna say it on the show. Because it's again, it's theory like it's affecting me. I'm sorry. You know what I'm saying?

Mandy Matney 24:13

Weird. Yeah.

Liz Farrell 24:15

I do not give much credit to the YouTubers, but I'm watching it. And I'm like, Oh, my gosh, like, Could this be? Was she being followed? What was going on? Like, I can't logic in my others, no logic about what was going on here? How like, we can say like, was she buying the gun to go do target practice? Well, she had to go to work that day and was on her way there. So I don't think she had target practice plan. Did she buy the gun for protect, like, what happened when she left her apartment to suddenly bring her to Dick's pawn shop? And was someone following her because again, there's footage at the gas station where people are saying that it looks like she was being followed by a guy in a black truck, but I don't know. I don't know. Right?



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Mandy Matney 25:00

Right. I know it's really, really bizarre. And the other thing is that I was thinking it's like the trail where her body was found is pretty difficult to get to but overgrown or my morbid thought was just like it would be really hard to place a bottle. You know what I mean? without anybody noticing? It's just a really, really weird situation. I? Yeah, I mean, all of those questions are just racing through my head like, why would you? Why would you cross the state line? Why would you bother to go to this weird place? And then as we were driving there, there was lots of other like, if you wanted a nice, secluded, peaceful place to go, the state park really wouldn't be it.

Liz Farrell 25:53

Because on a Saturday in April, you encounter a lot of people.

Mandy Matney 25:56

Yeah. And on a Saturday.

Eric Bland 25:59

Could it be Mandy and Liz that, you know, when you're driving your car, it's should I or shouldn't I you're playing in your mind, you'll say don't? I shouldn't, I mean, I've never talked to somebody who thought about it and didn't do it. Maybe she was vacillating back and forth. And that's what took her all the way to North Carolina and that spot, I don't know. What do you think?

Liz Farrell 26:18

I would say the one thing that did occur to me is that I think maybe you told me that her friend Charlotte said that she liked the beach. She likes it. Yeah, that kind of. So if she was headed, maybe she was headed for



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the Outer Banks or the or the coast. And maybe she just thought now I mean, I don't know. It's super hard to put our heads in. I know, they say when somebody has decided to kill themselves, they don't. They could see me the happiest they've ever been because they've made that decision in their mind. So it's sort of this burden that has been lifted off of them. And so they're not giving out any signs that suicide is is coming. So it's really just hard because you just hit don't You don't know. And I think what we do know though is what we can say to be true is the harassment that was happening leading up to her death will be right back to talk more about Mica.

Mandy Matney 27:21

On Wednesday, there was supposed to be a motion for temporary relief hearing. And Mica is technically...Mica as divorce case that her sister has continued doing the work for her and that case and her death, Mica wanted and her family now once a series of things such as separation of assets, she wants to be called Mica Francis and not Mica Miller. And that is something that we are now respecting and calling her Mica Francis instead of Mica Miller whenever we can, and getting that message out. And another thing was she wants the church to be involved.

Liz Farrell 28:05

So JP sold the house to the church in December when he was actively like their divorce case was open. Yeah. So they've added the church because they own them. They own one of the marital assets. Yes. So that's what she's trying to get. She's trying to get the court to say, that's actually a marital asset. That was a fraudulent sale.



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Eric Bland 28:24

That's saying, yeah, it's called a fraudulent conveyance. And they're naming the church's unnecessary party, that the church took the property under notice that there was a marital separation litigation going on, and they're not a bona fide purchaser for value, meaning that they're not an arm's length third party that doesn't know what's going on. And he was doing it to divest the marital assets. And so the sister is proceeding in her stead as if she's Mike, mica Francis, to continue the divorce so that there would be proper equitable distribution, separation of the marital assets and determination of what is a non marital asset?

Mandy Matney 29:06

Yes. So that hearing was supposed to be going on on Wednesday. And David and I made this decision early last week. We need to go to Myrtle Beach, we need to see this stuff anyways. If there's a hearing, let's go but we kept calling the clerk of court and the clerk of courts office kept saying they would not give us a direct exact answer of if it was going on. And but they kept saying there will be a press conference, there will be a press conference.

Liz Farrell 29:37

And why this is important for Mandy to know is because for us reporters in South Carolina, you have to file a rule 605 form with the judge in order for you to attend any hearing you want or any you know open court proceedings.

Eric Bland 29:51

Sometimes there's some family courts, family court judges, yes.



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Liz Farrell 29:55

Sometimes not family court. Yeah, absolutely. Family courts are a little different. Yeah. So for us, we have to get permission because we want to have our stuff with us. We want to have our laptops or phones, we want to be able to record the proceedings, if possible, and that's left up to the decision of each individual judge and Family Court certainly is not used to being asked that question, right. So on Wednesday morning, it was just not clear if the hearing was going to happen still and B, if it was going to happen. What about David and all the equipment? What about Mandy and all the who's who's going to be led into this thing, but they were sure about the press conference that was gonna happen.

Mandy Matney 30:33

Right. And it was incredibly frustrating. And I'm amused by it. This is very typical, unfortunately, with not having a clue I've never been this clueless as to Is anything going to happen up until the very last minute in the media kept reporting that it was still on there was media the day before that said it's off, and it was just chaotic. And then we had the episode on Thursday. So it's like, are we going to have an episode about this very dramatic hearing that all these things are going on? We're going to learn all of this, or are we going to have an episode about everything else? So all of that was just extreme. Oh, my gosh, it was literally 7000 degrees. In Conway, South Carolina. I'm still hot, just thinking about what's there? zero breeze, direct sunlight. I was a gush. So anyways, we met the clerk of court who is very, very nice. Her name's Rene Elvis. We go in and she comes around and introduces herself. It's like, welcome to our courthouse and she's so nice.



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Liz Farrell 31:39

If it's in, we're like she is reading a book.

Mandy Matney 31:41

I know. I was like, I'm getting Becky vibes. But she was just really nice and welcoming and proud. Sorry, Renee. But we said, where's this going on? Can we go blah, blah, blah, and we want to go to this courtroom? And she said, Well, it's no longer on the docket. But if you go back there, there's going to be a press conference at 2:30. But you wouldn't say that it's not going there. It's just up until the last minute, it was extremely stressful, extremely annoying. So the press conference was packed. I mean, there was a ton of media there. And when I say media, the landscape of media has changed dramatically. In the last couple of years. There were probably more YouTubers and newspaper reporters there. And that is just very strange, just social media, people who have found an audience and we go around and report this stuff. A lot of people at the press conference, they go over a few things that they agreed on, instead of having the hearing, one of which is that Robeson County has agreed to give the family mica stuff back eventually.

Liz Farrell 33:02

But they still haven't, they continued everything else. Right? They held everything in a band. So all the other core issues like the name change the right. fraudulent conveyance of property. Then I think the other thing that they did have was they mutual restraining orders, right? They did, yeah, they had mutual restraint on each other. So essentially, they're not allowed to talk about each other. Right? Is that? Is that how it is? Or?



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Mandy Matney 33:23

Eric, is that pretty normal? The lawyer said that that was pretty normal.

Eric Bland 33:28

I mean, restraining orders are definitely during the pendency of a divorce, where they separate the spouses or their families and say, Look, stay away from each other unless there's children involved.

Mandy Matney 33:38

It was mostly don't go. Both parties don't interact with each other, only interact with lawyers.

Liz Farrell 33:45

What the family had asked for was to prevent JP from posting about them on social media, or in any form. You know, about them, about mica, about my close friends. So they were seeking a restraining order for that. And we'll do this in True Sunlight this week. But when you look through the path that GPS divorces have taken, that's always on the table. It looks like Mica had asked for that as well. But when JP filed for divorce against Mica in February, he asked for something called a Neko. So it was something similar to a restraining order that would have prevented mica from quote unquote, you know, harassing him online, which she was not doing. But that I noticed that that was like a favorite move. I think so it sounded like that was what happened. What was concerning to me about the continuous like basically them saying, like we're going to hold these issues in abeyance for now. Is it felt like the person who benefited from that the most might have been JP because I imagine a lot would have come out. In the end, it sounded like he was preparing for that because he kept saying the truth is going to come



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out the truth is going to come out. But that hearing might have allowed the public to see a little bit more information as far as what Mike, you know, was going through leading up to her death, so by postponing it, the public doesn't get that. So what was cool is that Mica's attorney, let's just say that this was some sort of strategy because we've seen it in the divorce documents with Mica as other divorce him agreeing to terms and then not doing the thing he agreed to. And it's almost like he's buying himself time. What Regina Ward did is she gave a packet to the media. And in that packet basically said the things that might have been said in the hearing, right, Mandy?

Mandy Matney 35:35

Yes, and she focused, it was really brilliant. She focused on what the family wanted. And what the family really wants right now is to prevent this from happening to other women to prevent the hell that they are in. They do not want other families to go through what they're going through right now. And they obviously have dealt with this for years. And they have seen that Michael went to law enforcement so many times, and there's only so much law enforcement could do. So. On Wednesday, at the press conference, Regina Ward introduced Mica's Law and Mica's bill, which is a revamp of the coercive control bill that was introduced in 2020. And has been sitting and doing nothing in South Carolina ever since then. And it was also very interesting because Luke Rankin, who is Mike us, Senator, do you know Luke Rankin? Eric? Powerful. Yeah, he's a very, very well known, powerful state senator, and he is in charge of the Judiciary Committee, his office sits directly across the street from the courthouse, you can almost throw a stone where we were having this press conference, and his office was right there. And the bill got tied up and the Judiciary Committee. And so what Regina



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Ward said is Luke Rankin could have done something with this bill. And it could have been a lot easier for Mica, if this bill passed years ago, it could have been a lot easier for Mica to go to police, and they would at least have a roadmap of coercive control. This is abuse. And this is what it looks like. And he could have been, at least there could have been charges at this point. It could have been, I say, what it could have shut up. But you just never know if the system has changed. And if people listened to this bill and did something about it. Back then. I don't know if Mica would have had the same path. And that's a really tough thing to think about. But they introduced this bill with Mica as a list. And they also said we've gone through Mike as diaries, we've gone through her writings and the things that she accused JP of, and we want to be included in this bill. And Liz, do you want to go over some of those? They were just unbelievable. Yeah.

Liz Farrell 38:07

So let's first talk about what coercive control is. Domestic violence, as we understand it, is usually physical, right? Domestic violence laws, as they stand right now, are very physical, they're there. Right, you know, even down to like whether you have prevented somebody from taking a breath. That's, that's what's in the law. So that's how we understand domestic violence. I think just nationally, there are four states in the United States that actually have coercive control laws, and there are several countries that have them. And essentially what it means is that domestic abuse goes beyond the physical, there's emotional, there's mental threat that are being made. Absolutely. You know, it's a pattern, we're talking about a pattern of behavior that forms abuse. Okay, where's your dad? Where your dad wears you down?



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Eric Bland 39:00

I'd rather take a punch in the face than somebody who can kill me with words that linger right? In your head there. They're much more damaging at times. Right.

Liz Farrell 39:10

So what Regina Ward did is she took from Mica's journals and from family history and what have you, behaviors that she knows that Mica says that she was experiencing and she made elements of this, like what this law should look like and gave as examples what Mica was going through. So for instance, one thing Mandy and I have been talking about a lot since last week is how coercive control laws are not very appetizing to male legislators. And the reason being is that it's the kind of law that I think men fear, men generally because it they can easily imagine themselves being accused of that behavior. It's it's something that maybe a lot of relationships experience and they shouldn't So, what worries us is that this is not going to go very far because male legislators and certainly Senator Rankin did not like what Regina Ward said about him and the press conference and immediately came out with a statement that was completely dismissive of what she was asking him to do. highly defensive very much with his big Senator energy coming at you at a time when it's like, Dude, we need you to say that this is important and that this is yes. Okay. We'll take a look at it. Now that you've explained it in a way that I can understand it. Yeah, we'll take a look. We won't let it sit in the judiciary. So that was very, very disappointing. But um, do you want to Yeah, go ahead.



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Mandy Matney 40:41

Okay. Mica is list a isolating her family and friends and depriving her basic needs stalking, tracking her whereabouts, monitoring her communications, taking control of aspects of her life, depriving her of support services, expressing her worthlessness, humiliated, degraded and dehumanized her and then it has examples below each of these bullet points in these are allegations to be clear, but this allegation says JP forced her to submit to humiliating sexual acts that disgusted and hurt her he would tell her that she was mentally ill and have her hospitalized against her will he put her down for having ideas or getting inspired by outside influences, telling her or others that she fell for anything and she wasn't smart. JP uploaded a semi nude photo of his wife to the internet and later apologized in an email and attempted to minimize the damage by stating it was only up for an hour um, so each one has examples like that that just make your jaw drop make your stomach hurt.

Eric Bland 41:46

She was smart to do this way because she released things that you would never get from family court proceedings, right.

Mandy Matney 41:53

And it was really smart. Prevented disclosure to authorities when Mica threatened to expose JP he would ramp up his abuse and tell her that if she did he was not a Christian woman, not a dutiful wife, and that she was acting like the judge. You know, only God is the judge. Another one is financial abuse. JP removed her from bank accounts, allegedly and told her that she didn't know how to manage your money at threats to hurt her, her family himself threats to reveal or publish private



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information. Assault and she went on about this how assault is not the act of like battery is actually hitting somebody but assault.

Eric Bland 42:35

Yes.

Mandy Matney 42:38

One of the worst was when she was hospitalized. JP demanded that she have sex with him while she lay in the hospital. And I also want to know how, how is that able to go down at a mental facility in a hospital?

Eric Bland 42:53

He does see people walking the halls they come in for blood pressure, right?

Liz Farrell 42:59

How many cognitively disabled people have gotten pregnant in their hospital bed by hospital workers? You know, seriously.

Mandy Matney 43:05

It's horrible. Yeah. Horrible, preventing her from having transportation. And this is a big one. A lot of women, I think what's horrible about the story, but also eye opening is the amount of women who have been inspired to tell their stories and what happened to them in their stories of getting out and surviving. And a lot of people have said, Yeah, my ex husband cut me off from all transportation. I didn't have a car. So what was I supposed to do? How do I get out of this marriage if I don't have a car, interfering with her work?



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Liz Farrell 43:39

The pulling the blanket off of her was something that stuck with me the most like her trying to sleep and he would pull the bed clothes off of her to wake to make sure that she couldn't fall asleep. So he'd like to deprive her of sleep. Yeah, that's me. As somebody who loves to sleep, the idea of that not being safe in your own home, not being able to just get in your bed and escape and God, right.

Mandy Matney 44:01

And then you mentally break down. So all of these things are just chipping away at your soul and your ability to live. And I think looking at this list in totality, my biggest takeaway was, I mean, this is probably one of the worst abuse cases I've ever seen. It's heartbreaking. It's horrifying. It also makes me surprised she lasted as long as that if she did. And she hung on for as long as she did because I mean, this is hell what she is describing as a personal hell. It is waking up every day being terrorized by another human being. And you're married to that human being.

Eric Bland 44:49

You know, we want to be clear that these are allegations made by a lawyer. Some I guess are backed up by police reports but you know it They'll, they'll have to be vetted and litigated. And certainly, you know, but from a general sense, from a legal sense, of course of type of legislation, those are the things that should be focused on non physical abuse, right? I mean, that is how you do it, you it's cumulative, you use the words chipping away at your soul, you cut transportation, you cut the finances, you belittle, you make somebody tired, that their question you interfere with their work, you cut them off from their, their resources and communication patterns. That's how it's done. And you



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beat somebody down to the point that, you know, dying is a better option than living. And that is sad. Yeah.

Liz Farrell 45:49

And there's nothing to protect her. So there's no law in South Carolina that any law enforcement officer can use. When we look at the police reports. Eric, there's, it's clear that we all know this, like police officers have a difficult job. We know that there is a movement out there that says that people don't want to be police officers because of the political climate against them that they know people don't appreciate them, what have you. But in my experience a lot of police officers, law enforcement officers are burnt out because of the domestic cases that they have to constantly respond to. So they are not prepared for that, they are not trained in that in a way that's their special interest, you know, then they're not psychologists, but they're constantly asked to go to the scene and act like psychologists, right? They're constantly got this stuff that these guys and these women and these men see when it comes to domestic relations if it wears on you right. And certainly we know that the number of law enforcement officers who are domestic abusers themselves is higher than average for that profession. So I think what happens, what we could see in his reports is they're taking JPS word, it looks like that they're taking JPS word. So when he says that the cars are in both their names, it's marital property, the police officers are not like, let me just take a second look at my laptop and my car and see if that's true. Because had they done that they would have seen it was in my kid's name only, and that car belonged to her. And I understand that, you know, marital property being what it is, that there's an argument that can be made that it's for him, but at that moment, she had nothing to drive. She had nothing to get around with. And she was



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simply asking for her car back and the officer had to side with JP instead, it was a civil matter.

Eric Bland 47:29

And so you just said something that's so important. Yeah, law enforcement, the minute they smell, that there could be a civil remedy, right? They hands off. That's right. They say, Okay, we don't, we don't want to get involved, you're gonna have to go to civil court if they smell that there's a lawsuit or there's a disputed claim as to property ownership. A judge is going to have to decide that and then they back off. I see it all the time in my practice.

Liz Farrell 47:57

Yeah, all the time. And you know, all sorts of things where you think like, I'm not supposed to be defrauded as a homeowner and have somebody come in demanding \$15,000 to fix my roof and then not show up. But there's nothing I can do. I have to go to a small claims court in Ohio.

Eric Bland 48:11

You read about it in New York about the squatters, the squatting rent that's going on, people buy an investment property in somebody, some fake realtor says I can lease this to you and they lease the property to the person. And then all of a sudden you find out as the homeowner, I got a tenant that I've never even contracted with. But you can't get them out. I'm reading these stories in New York City, it can take up to a year to get a squatter out of your place.

Liz Farrell 48:37



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And you think like that, that should be illegal. That should be like a fraud. So what's the deal here?

Eric Bland 48:42

No, the police say I can't handle it. They're telling me that their tenant is showing me a lease here right? Even though this isn't your signature, go deal with it in civil court.

Liz Farrell 48:52

So as far as Mica, like in order for her, she's constantly calling the police to say there's a tracker on my car, there's a tracker on my car, there's a tracker on my car. And she's she's you can tell by the little that they wrote in their police reports that she's screaming for help from them. She's saying Help me like I'm being tortured by this person. What can you do, and there's nothing they can do because the act of abuse isn't physically theirs. They need a statute to point to, and that's why we need South Carolina to create a statute so that they have that that they can look and say, Okay, now we have a pattern.

Eric Bland 49:26

Well, we do have harassment. We have stalking statutes. What they choose not to do is what you're sick of which you should be right.

Mandy Matney 49:32

And that's true. Exactly. And that was brought up in the press conference of the clear pattern of harassment. I think in South Carolina, it's three incidents, collectively, that a person is contacting you and threatening unwanted contact. But what happened in this case, and what happens in a lot of cases is the work around and I don't know if JP



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was cryptic enough to think of this. But a lot of this stuff happened in different districts. And when there's not three incidents in one district, the police officers also not usually are not going to go into the system and look at other incidents and see if this is a pattern, but they call it...

Liz Farrell 50:18

You can't see them. You can only see your Yeah, you can only see in Beaufort County, for instance, you could see possible incidents in Bluffton and Beaufort right, possibly, it depends on whether that other agency is allowing you into their database. But generally speaking, you as the victim would have to be able to have so you'd have to be carrying around a binder with you, you would have to once you report to the police, you would have to go into the office to get a copy of your report. And if anyone's listening, who's going through this, the incident report, get a number, get your incident report. So if you've called the police for something that's happening to you, it is important that you advocate for yourself, unfortunately, because you are the only person who's going to have your back. So you need to go into that law enforcement office, get the number of the incident report and get a copy of it. And you just think of it like your medical history. It's crazy. You're gonna have to carry it around with you so that you can show it the next time you have to call the police. And I think there's so many people who don't understand jurisdiction, rightfully so because it's like, why would I need to think about that everyone's the police, right? I saw people showing up at the 14th circuit solicitor's office thinking they were the police, right? It's you, you've got to know the name of the agency. What is it said on the car, what is the badge number, get the guy's name that you spoke with? You've got to advocate for yourself. It's sad, but true. Unfortunately,

Eric Bland 51:39



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We have a system where law enforcement wants to purge files in and not take on matters rather than take them on and increase the workload. I'm not saying that it happens across the board. But it's a system that's built to get rid of cases and transfer them to somebody else's problem, another jurisdiction, another court, rather than dealing with the problem, it's a problem in our system.

Liz Farrell 52:09

Look at what Sierra Francis did, Mica's sister. When JP was texting that he's armed and he's ready, and he's coming to Gaffney to get Mica, she called 911. And the first words out of her mouth, were you know, I'm not sure that this is an emergency or that I should have called the non emergency line. But I want to get this on the record. And that's so smart. We don't want to bother. We don't want to get records, we don't want to seem like we're making too big of a situation out of something dramatic.

Eric Bland 52:34

Yeah, or more dangerous.

Mandy Matney 52:38

And women are used to being told that they're being dramatic, they're used to being told that they are making a big deal out of nothing, they're used to being told that they're making things up in their head that you shouldn't take this seriously, this is your fault. So when, and this is something I'm noticing in everyday life, I'm always afraid of taking up space, and I'm always afraid of interrupting someone else's life. So a lot of women and I'm one of them. When we do something like call the police. We start with like, kind of apologizing. And we start with like a,



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this is where I'm coming from blah, blah, blah, where you see the difference in police reports. A lot of men just call and say this is how it is. And this is so messed up because they're not used to being told their entire lives that they are being dramatic or they're lying, or they are making things up in their head and they just need to smile and calm down.

Liz Farrell 53:32

We're hysterical. We're experiencing hysteria, hysteria.

Mandy Matney 53:37

And I want to talk about the rest of this list after we take a commercial break because there are a few items that are of particular importance to me and I want to talk about them. So we'll be right back.

Liz Farrell 54:02

I have a story to tell you when I was a reporter at the packet we used to go look at reports. And so every day we would go and depending on who the reporter on duty was to do it literally physically go through the reports. But one time I was at the sheriff's office and I'm not sure if it was for that or another reason and my esthetician you know the the one the the woman who does the micro needling that she has she walked into and I'm not giving her identity because I've lots of situations but she walked into the sheriff's office to report that she was being harassed and stalked by a former boyfriend. And the abject fear and like the look of fear on her face sort of like the apologetic demeanor that she had for being there. You know, three men were in the lobby, three sheriff's deputies. They're off, you know, not uniformed, and they all just sort of looked at her silently while she was trying to explain. I just



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felt like the spotlight was on her at this moment. She was continuing to shrink as she was saying the details of what sounded Oh horrible tip that she had broken up with this guy, and he couldn't get us through his head. She had children. And you know, this was becoming a big problem. And she was literally scared. And so I remember getting angry. And I said to one of the deputies who was there, and he was in command staff, and I was like, they better take this seriously. I'm going to check up on this to make sure that they take whatever she's telling them seriously, they brought her into an office. And honestly, I just didn't get the feeling. Like, I just got this feeling of this, like, I felt so bad for her because of the way they were regarding her. It was toward the end of their shift the end of the day, they were just sort of like, okay, come on in. And it's just, you're not understanding that in that moment to that person. That is their whole life, that is an existential threat. That is something that is like affecting them in every way. And you could just see it in her demeanor. And I just that haunts me thinking about that moment of just the spotlight on her.

Eric Bland 55:55

Well think about the courage, it took the courage it took for her to decide to go to the police with this complaint, right, and then to go there and be treated in the way that she does. It's dehumanizing. Yeah. And they leave and say, I have no options here.

Liz Farrell 56:11

That's right. And like that, I think going back to like that question of Why didn't you call the police? Why didn't you? You know, why don't you tell somebody? Well, in my case case, she was telling people she was you know, she was telling the police she was she was making that



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difficult decision to have to call, even though she knew at a you know, by the third time that that trackers on her car, that they're not going to be doing anything about it. She's simply just making a paper trail.

Mandy Matney 56:35

For what, right? And then the other thing is, she applied for a restraining order, but didn't get it. But that's another thing that we've talked about, to great lengths, you can fight the good fight. And you can even get a restraining order. But it's just a piece of paper, you wave in front of somebody. And how many men have busted through restraining orders and killed women. That's happened a lot. And in fact, I don't know if there's statistics on this. But I know of situations where a lot of times it agitates the person who is getting a restraining order against them, and they get even more violent. They say, Yo, you're trying to get power over me. And I think the other thing is that we are not recognizing statistics here and statistics, that men who are showing this pattern of harassment and this pattern of increasing, threatening and increasing threats and this pattern of they will not take no for an answer. They get violent, it gets worse. And it's a very, very, very dangerous time for a woman to be in. So why is it so hard for a woman like that to walk into a police department and police are supposed to protect public safety and they are supposed to be there to not just catch the bad guys, but to prevent crime and to come up with a to make the world a safer place. And that should be a lightning bolt, ding, ding, ding moment of wow, this guy is about to get violent. So we have to step in and do something.

Eric Bland 58:12



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Do you think there was deference being paid to JP because he was a pastor that that was it sometimes, depending on who you are and what you do for a living? You know if he was, and not to disparage, but just a normal, hard working hourly worker, would they have looked at it differently, possibly is what I'm asking you.

Liz Farrell 58:31

I think that man always gets the benefit of the doubt. Unfortunately, I know men probably would disagree with that. But I think when you have a pastor who's carrying around a badge, apparently, you're also talking about a different set. And we're going to talk about that a little bit about JP pastor life. And what that actually looks like, because pastors that I know, or that I think I know, I think better supposed to be a certain way. This guy isn't really fitting the bill from what I can see.

Eric Bland 59:05

So have you guys gotten a feel from the congregation? Like where they stand on this? Are they 50/50? Or is it all JP or more Mica? Are you getting a feel for it?

Mandy Matney 59:17

His army is getting smaller and smaller. But the few that remain are scheduling are increasingly scary. Yeah. It's almost just as scary for somebody to continue to support someone like that. After I mean, I just keep asking how, what else do they need at this point? How, what else do they need to see that this man is not who he is said that he is and that He is not a man of God and He is not. He is not somebody that you should be and what's scary is that he believes that he is somebody who believes he knows more than and everybody else who knows how to



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live life and knows how to treat others more than everybody else does. And for people to continue to follow him and think that they need to be living like him is a very scary thing. In your opinion. Yeah, in my opinion. I mean, it was creepy. We went by the church, and we went around it. Wasn't much going on. So it is in the market, a common community of Myrtle Beach.

Liz Farrell 1:00:27

And what does that mean? It's a nice area, right? It used to be the more of an upper scale?

Mandy Matney 1:00:31

Used to be the Air Force Base. And they made it the market common community. So there's really really cute neighborhoods picture perfect little houses, lakes around.

Liz Farrell 1:00:45

Is that kind of like Palmetto Bluff?

Mandy Matney 1:00:49

It's not Palmetto Bluff, fancy, but it is. It's a nice little area. And there's also a gay club around the corner. We noticed that too. And we're like, Huh, that's interesting.

Liz Farrell 1:01:00

A hop, skip and a jump away.

Mandy Matney 1:01:01



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That's interesting. I don't know how this man still has followers. And that's the scariest thing in the world to me.

Liz Farrell 1:01:10

Well, let's talk a bit more about the list, maybe that you want to point out because I mean, this list was available, I would imagine to those members, as well, to anyone who would want to see it, right.

Eric Bland 1:01:19

And David's going to make it available to you guys who are listening. He's going to make it available as well.

Mandy Matney 1:01:24

Yes, it is available to our listeners.

Liz Farrell 1:01:26

And I just want to point out before you start just real quick, like JP does a saying that all of this is not true. So in order for us to believe that Mica kept a, you know, tons of journals outlining what was going on in her marriage for some future date when she was going to kill herself. And suddenly the world would be watching. You got to kind of put that like what you really think that she was plotting to like...

Eric Bland 1:01:50

It just doesn't make sense.

Liz Farrell 1:01:53



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She's writing these journals at the moment unless she's gone. Girl. I don't know, so I just want to put that out there.

Eric Bland 1:01:59

Well, look, you know, the new thing in our society is total denial, right? New total denial. Just never, never accept responsibility. Don't yield an inch. Don't just say it never happened. And if you continually say you say it long enough and loud enough, enough, people are going to believe it.

Mandy Matney 1:02:16

Yeah. And JP is very used to saying that he is a man that is used to telling 100 people, this is true. This isn't true. And them all just nodding their heads and saying yeah, okay, and not fact checking him. He is not a man used to fat checks, which is a little funny to me. But so this is the part that I really liked misuse of legal documents. And the allegation is JP had a lawyer draft a postnuptial agreement, and demanded that she sign it.

Liz Farrell 1:02:46

That's the question we had, we were wondering about the postnuptial. Right. Right. And we had questions about whether she had signed that under duress or not.

Eric Bland 1:02:55

They're not as enforceable as prenuptial agreements, they're very difficult to write and be enforced because of the situation that somebody is signing it clearly, in a desperate situation.

Mandy Matney 1:03:06



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The allegation is that JP had an attorney right and send a cease and desist letter to Mike demanding that she stopped talking bad about JP and this in the church or she would suffer legal ramifications.

Eric Bland 1:03:19

Cease and desist letters are really an interesting thing. You know, I've read a lot of them. You do, in situations where people go on the internet and badmouth a client of mine, you know, you have a First Amendment right to your opinion, but you don't have a First Amendment right to inaccurate facts. I write cease and desist letters to ex employees that are out there competing and things like that. But I've never done a cease and desist letter between spouses. But you know, there are ways that you can do them. And you can if it's business to business, you can invoke unfair trade practices. It's unfair competition. When you're out there spreading falsehoods on the internet. It could be tortious interference with the contract. Interesting, it could be that he's raising issues that she's breaching the marital contract. And that's why the cease and desist letters were being sent out. They can get very creative in how you do them. And I do a lot of them. I'm asked to do a lot of them. So I don't, but lawyers send them routinely.

Liz Farrell 1:04:33

So how much do they cost? Eric, like if you wanted to send a cease and desist letter, how much you called the lawyer.

Eric Bland 1:04:39

I may not charge a lot of money for my services, you know, I would charge you know, anywhere from \$2500 to \$5,000, depending on if it's a letter for letter if it's busy, but it comes from somebody who has



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experience I'm not saying that I'm anybody but if it comes from people that have been practicing, like I have for 36 years and have exceeded Your hands, it will kill them. And what you do is like you put like an N, subsequent employer on notice to say, Hey, you're assisting this person. So I'm now going to sue you with this person and conspiracy because you guys are conspiring to harm me. So you all need to cease and desist. And usually people don't want litigation. Some people do. And some people will pay the money for it. But usually they work. I mean, probably 75% of the time they work when I send them.

Liz Farrell 1:05:28

So what is the cease and desist letter in the sense of like, I know, on Hilton Head, you're not supposed to drink on the beach, that's an ordinance, but people drink on the beach. And there's not really somebody going around being like, don't drink on the beach. They're just expecting people to follow the ordinance like there's sort of a statistical reliance that you can have on people following it. So are you assuming that when you send the cease and desist letter to anyone, that there's a certain percentage of people that are just going to cease and desist? So just the letter alone is enough?

Eric Bland 1:05:58

They don't want to go to a lawyer that they don't want to get? Yes. They don't want to have to go to a lawyer to justify their conduct. Sometimes they do. Why wait?

Liz Farrell 1:06:07



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So when they try to justify when you say go to a lawyer to justify their conduct? So are you saying there's different types of cease and desist? Like? Are you sending one that has a lot more ramifications than just simply saying, stop what you're doing?

Eric Bland 1:06:17

I do I tell them what will happen if you don't. Here's why you shouldn't be doing what you do. It exceeds your first amendment rights of speech and opinion, you're you're doing this that's in there interfering with a business or you're saying something that's factually inaccurate? Here's what I'm going to do if it continues, but I am not your lawyer. I suggest you go to a lawyer who will counsel you and give you the appropriate advice on whether you should continue this conduct or cease and desist. Most people don't want to spend the money to go to a lawyer. Most people don't understand the law to know that they can be sued. And it's costly. It's protracted litigation. It's time consuming and personally intrusive, all the things that we hate about lawyers and litigation, but some people will say 75% of the time, most people say okay, I proved my point, I make people take it down off the internet, I say, you have to take this off Instagram and off of Facebook. And they do and they provide proof to me that they've done it. But sometimes they double down and they'll write Oh, I just got this lawyer letter from a lawyer who's trying to, you know, bully me and done it. And then they keep it up. I have people who post signs. I represent builders and developers. So you have HOA regulations. And let's say they're dissatisfied with a builder. Well, there's a sign ordinance in your HOA that says you can only put for sale signs that conform with what the Architectural Review Committee sacred put on your lawn? Well, they'll put signs on the lawn and say, don't buy a home from bland builders.

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It's a lemon, they don't follow their warranty or they won't do the repairs. And they put up that kind of sign or they start sending circulars out. Well, that violates the HOA, I'll send a cease and desist letter to them. If not, then I go get an injunction.

Liz Farrell 1:08:03

So the reason we're asking that, obviously, it's because there's cease and desist letters in play here. As Mandy was saying that the family was sent or Mica was sent one and then the family was sent cease and desist letters from JP Sawyer. Is that correct?

Mandy Matney 1:08:18

I don't know if the family has been sent letters or not. So we know that Mica had been sent them there was a general cease and desist letter that they sent out to several local media and about a month ago basically saying stop making fun of JP are stopped saying that JP is mean. Just stop it.

Liz Farrell 1:08:43

And well, I think in the case of people calling a member I think that's...

Eric Bland 1:08:47

What that's like a paper mache that's, like so many standards, talking out of a paper mache out of there, but I mean, why you gotta it's got to come with force and authority. I mean, I'd laugh and you would laugh. But sometimes people do get seasick. If some lawyer writes you a letter, you're like, Whoa, maybe I have exceeded my right here on the internet.

Liz Farrell 1:09:07



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Well, calling him a murderer wasn't cool. I'm just gonna say that. Like, I mean, right people out there on social media, what do you like about him just assuming that he murdered his wife and sent in stating that is a fact? You don't have the right to do that? Right. That's not right. So I understand from that perspective.

Mandy Matney 1:09:23

But he has continued the cease and desist pattern. And so the day after the press conference on our two days after the press conference, on Friday morning, Charlotte, Mica's amazing best friend texted me a picture of the cease and desist letter that she got from from JPS attorney Russell Long, and saw it was, I've never seen assistant a cease and desist letter with so many misspelling. They spelled the CES wrong at one point. And he's all the hearsay wrong.

Eric Bland 1:10:06

People, they spell it with a C instead of an S.

Mandy Matney 1:10:09

It was like a baby lawyer was pretending to copy a cease and desist letter. And that's how it reads. It was absurd, or are you specific in cease and desist letters that you write saying like, this is false, what you are saying, and you need to take it down?

Eric Bland 1:10:27

Yes, I set forth the facts that are wrong, and why and you have to understand why lawyers do cease and desist letters. Because ultimately, if they go to a court, a judge is going to want to know, hey, before you came to me to get this injunction, did you try to stop them from doing



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it? And I say, Yes, we sent a cease and desist letter, and I set forth exactly what they can do and what they are doing. That's wrong. And so the judge then looks at the other side and says, Okay, why did you continue to do this? When you know, this is against, you know, the HOA guidelines, or you know, this is not factually true, he provided you with a document that showed you that you're wrong. So a cease and desist letter isn't always just to stop somebody. It's a preliminary thing, step that you take before you go to court so that you can show a judge at least I tried.

Mandy Matney 1:11:24

Right, which makes sense. If you have if somebody is out there writing just horrific, baseless lies in spreading rumors about you, then I would imagine you say in the cease and desist letter, you posted this on this day, it is factually incorrect.

Eric Bland 1:11:41

I put the post in there. Yep, exactly.

Mandy Matney 1:11:45

This did not happen in this scenario, it was gentle, it was very general. It was just basically stopped spreading false allegations about JP Miller. And it also said, We would like you to show us the evidence that you have to back up the claims that you are making. Do you do that?

Eric Bland 1:12:06

I don't have to do that. Now I know. Now, now sometimes I do ask them, hey, who have you disseminated this to? I need to find out all the different people that you've disseminated this to so the answer is, it's a



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fishing expedition that the person is doing. And by the way, JP doesn't want to sue for defamation, because once he sues for defamation, truth is a defense. And there'll be a ton of discovery into the truthfulness of the allegations that people are saying about him. So he's not going to put his reputation at risk. Exactly.

Mandy Matney 1:12:38

And, and what is his reputation at this point, like to turn the shots? Right, and that couldn't possibly all be blamed on Charlotte. I mean, there is so many different sources out there claiming that this man said and did different things beyond what she's allowed to share.

Liz Farrell 1:12:54

And you know, what her first hand experience was her opinions based on what she's in her text messages what she's able to that she experienced. Yeah, exactly.

Eric Bland 1:13:08

So there's no, here's the guideline, you know, patch, Mort, Daniel Patrick Moynihan said, You're entitled to your own opinion, but not your own set of facts. So as long as you're right with the facts, you can say whatever you want, regarding what your opinion is, he's, uh, I don't think he's a nice guy. There's no, that's not defamation. You know, I don't think he's a nice guy. I don't think he's somebody that you should marry. That's perfectly fine. But if you start to say, well, he's a physical abuser, well, you better back that up, because then you are defaming him.

Liz Farrell 1:13:37



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Right. And so I guess another question is, so JP has come out and said that, like anyone can write whatever they want in a police report, which is true, but obviously, it's a document of what you've told the police. So that's why we always attribute.

Eric Bland 1:13:49

No, that's not true. That's not true at all. There's malicious prosecution.

Liz Farrell 1:13:53

That's right. You're right. You're right. So if somebody lies, you can't lie to the police. You can't lie to the police. But people do it. People do it.

Eric Bland 1:14:00

And I'm saying if you lie, the police, it's lying to a state agency. I'm saying if you go and you file a police report against me and say, Eric did this, this and this, and I was in England, then I can sue you for malicious prosecution.

Liz Farrell 1:14:14

Interesting, because I guess what I'm saying is that obviously, one person's account is going to differ from another person's account. So the person who got to the police first who was able to put their story into the police report that, you know, I guess what I'm saying is there's like more latitude there. But when we're talking about affidavits we're talking about How's that different Eric?

Eric Bland 1:14:34



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It's under oath, but what you don't what you always have and magistrates are so on guard for this, these competing charges. So one spouse goes to the police first, and they say I was abused by my husband, Eric bland. And then as soon as I find out, I go to the and I find my own charge and say wait a minute, I was just defending myself. Liz, my wife, ran at me and then came at me and I was just defending myself. And they won't take that competing warrant. It really is who gets there first that files that first morning, you will have a defense against that by saying, Look, I was this was self defense. But it's very difficult in domestic litigation because each spouse tries to file a warrant against each other. And then it's a he said she said kind of thing.

Liz Farrell 1:15:25

Wasn't there a law in South Carolina at one point? I don't know if it still exists, where if a police officer can't decide who the aggressor was, they had the right to arrest both parties, the you know, alleged abuser and the alleged victim. Yeah, that's something Mandy that would have toured like when you would see this happen at the paper.

Eric Bland 1:15:41

We don't want our police officers to have a curbside courtroom. No, I do not want that.

Liz Farrell 1:15:47

Right.

Eric Bland 1:15:50



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Going back to the affidavit, though, you know, one side to be able to state their case. Yes.

Liz Farrell 1:15:53

So with the affidavit, so JP telling the public, like, just because his ex wife put this in an affidavit just because Sierra Francis, Nathaniel Francis put this an affidavit doesn't make it true, but an affidavit. I think this is important for people to understand, and I'm sure a lot of our listeners already know, but it's as good as testifying with your hand on the Bible. Right?

Eric Bland 1:16:15

It's essentially like it is under penalty of perjury. A statement is just a statement. It's somebody writing down what you said. So you're the police officer, you come to my house, and you'll say complaining party number one, Eric bland said this, this and this and this. Well, that's just you writing down what I said, or I may write my own statement, but when you get that notary stamp on there, that invokes perjury, that invokes truthfulness, you are raising your hand, as if you're in a courtroom in front of a judge or a jury and her serious ramifications for that.

Liz Farrell 1:16:51

Meaning that if somebody lied in their affidavit, then they could be held.

Eric Bland 1:16:55



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Martha Stewart. When Martha Stewart went to prison for lying in 302, or 302 is when you're being interviewed by a federal official, and she lied about the insider trading that she did on the stock she did 10 months.

Liz Farrell 1:17:07

She went to prison for lying on an affidavit.

Eric Bland 1:17:11

Lied under oath to the judge, and he's now back in jail for five months.

Liz Farrell 1:17:17

So yeah serious ramifications, I would say. So you can't lie. JP basically saying that these affidavits anyone can say anything in an affidavit. It's really just I mean, you can but there's, there's ramifications for that. No, that's not true at all. Right. So that's important for people to know. So because there are sworn like when we're talking about the things that we know about the case, and we're attributing it to Allison Williams, his first wife's affidavit to Sarah Francis's affidavit, that's where this information, a lot of it is coming from.

Mandy Matney 1:17:46

So with the cease and desist in Charlotte, thank goodness that she is one of the 25% that does not, does not just comply, does not look at something and just say, oh, gosh, scary lawyers are after me. She did the smart thing. And she posted it on the internet with a great smiling picture of her and a baseball cap saying, Look at this, I'm gonna frame this, I'm not afraid of you, like quit trying to intimidate me, because that's not going to work, which is just really, really amazing. And I applaud her so much. And I just keep thinking about this. Yeah, and



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how important it is for everybody to have a friend like Charlotte to fight for them. When they can't fight for themselves.

Eric Bland 1:18:32

Think about it, Mandy, if he sends out 20 or 30 of these letters, and 24 people stop, then he's accomplished what he's wanted, because less and less people are talking about him. If 30 People were talking about him, he couldn't stop 24 of them. So that's why the cease and desist letter is effective. On some people. It shouldn't be, but it is.

Mandy Matney 1:18:56

Right. And also you like you said you have to spend unless he has a lawyer working for free for him, which would raise a lot of questions. He would have to spend some serious money just to send 25 Cease and desist. And is that really worth it for most people? No, you just kind of let the truth prevail or whatever. But I thought that the cease and desist was just another example of him, tormenting people in Charlotte's life and doing exactly the things on his list, misuse of legal documents. Two other things that are on this list is misuse of law enforcement, as we talked about earlier, JP calling the police on her for no reason and accusing her of crimes and misuse of the legal process. And I hope that lawmakers take these things very seriously because this is especially the last three examples. This is not just JP allegedly abusing my gut, this is the system abusing her. And this is the system letting her down. This is other people in the system working for JP and helping break down my gut in the way that they did. And I was just, I was incredibly taken aback by this list. Like I said, I just read a part of it that I thought that I've read the whole thing. And I didn't, because I mean, I just kept stopping and being like, oh my gosh, I cannot imagine. It's sickening.



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It's horrific. And it's, this is just way more twisted and different than Murdaugh ever was.

Liz Farrell 1:20:41

It's just, it's hard to say that too. It was just the anniversary of Maggie and Paul's deaths. And so it's hard to say like, you know, you look back and Alec and you're like, This murderer just makes me feel a little softer toward them. It's not actually the case. But it's like this case is just so twisted up. There's certainly no evidence of it, though. Like in this case, we've got a ton of evidence. And we're I think that that's where JP is in trouble in the sense of like, you know, sending out these mass cease and desist letters. We're, you know, most people are forming their opinion based on his well, we'll start with the affidavits, but his own behavior. And I think we should talk about that real quick before we go, because we were talking earlier about him not being maybe like the best definition of a pastor. People go. And I think it's the same with rabbis, Eric, you go to your trusted religious leader, to unpair, your soul, unburdened your soul, right? You go to somebody who convenes with God so that you can get forgiven the darkest parts of yourself, you can possibly put into the hands of a pastor or a rabbi or whoever you a priest in, for instance, but you don't expect that Rabbi priest pastor to turn around and then use the information that they've gained through being your trusted religious adviser against you in the future. Right. And is there anything that protects people from that?

Eric Bland 1:21:57

Yes, there is a priest patient, a priest parishioner privilege, but there are rights and I have been involved in cases where spiritual leaders have given counseling and exceeded that counseling and use the



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information against that person, dated that person and then used what they found out in that counseling to beat that person down, believe it or not.

Liz Farrell 1:22:22

So civilly, there's a path toward some sort of accountability there, right. Oh, yeah. That's good to know. Because I think, you know, one of the things that I think we've learned about Mike is that information that that JP allegedly had about her was then allegedly used against her meaning like, I will let people know this information, right. So JP posted, and I'm not sure it was that JP who posted that Tiktok or somebody was like a third party I don't even know Yeah, so JP put out a video yesterday, Eric and basically saying like, under the justice for mica banner, that the truth is going to come out what have you, but that he has 350 separate pieces of evidence that show what Mica really thought of people like her family, her friend, Charlotte, what have you. But also like, you're you're watching this and you're sort of like, this is a pastor.

Mandy Matney 1:23:16

Yeah. And in this video, he is saying to people that love mica and are fighting for her right now. Her friends, her family, said Charlotte's name. You don't have any idea what Mica said about you. And so he's created. He's trying to create turmoil.

Eric Bland 1:23:33

I don't care. Mica was...Mica could say, I'm a horrible person, but she's, she's conflicted. She's being psychologically manipulated. Who knows if she really understood what she was saying, or men? You know, what they could have just been words to appease JP at the time.



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Mandy Matney 1:23:50

Or if she actually said any of this, he was known to take her phone and send messages from her good point, Mandy. And there's just it's just unbelievable that this man still thinks that he has any shred of credibility that he can release anything that anybody would ever believe, because there's just been so much evidence against him and the things that he did. And the other thing before we go that I just want to say is that that videos proving exactly what this list is saying that video is the same person that would do these things, somebody that would try to somebody who would weaponize the personal things that you said to them, maybe or maybe not, or somebody that is just still trying to cause so much hurt in somebody's life, even after their death. He's harassing her in her death. He's threatening her in her death by doing it to the ones that she loves.

Liz Farrell 1:24:45

That is some malicious behavior. And that is what we're seeing with JP and this video that he put out, it's malicious, it's hateful, it is manipulative to a degree I can't even and he's doing it with a lifesize Spider Man And next to him and I'm not sure if the inference is that we're supposed to believe that he's a superhero to the convenience of superheroes or what but all I see is a husband who spent way too much money on a toy.

Eric Bland 1:25:09

Well he's definitely spinning webs and re spinning webs for sure.

Mandy Matney 1:25:14



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Yeah he's definitely spinning webs. I don't know what's next. This is a very Murdaugh situation and like I just feel like every day we get whipped around a lot and you never know what's next. And that video kind of threw me a little bit but he was exactly who I thought that he was this entire time and he's just continuing to prove that so whatever's next we are ready.

Eric Bland 1:25:42

And a long good episode. Lots of meat in this one.

Liz Farrell 1:25:45

Cups down guys.

Eric Bland 1:25:45

Cups down.

Mandy Matney 1:25:57

Cup of Justice is a Luna Shark production created by me, Mandy Matney and co-hosted by journalists Liz Farrell and attorney Eric Bland. Learn more about our mission and membership and lunasharkmedia.com. Interruptions provided by Luna and Joe Pesky.