



## EPISODE 54: Escaping JP Miller + Mica's Law and the Mission to Make Coercive Control a Crime in SC

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**Mandy Matney** 00:03

I don't know if anyone will ever be held accountable for Mica Miller's death, but I am angry after hearing more horrific details of the abuse she allegedly endured, and I am furious to learn just how hard our system made it for multiple women to escape JP. My name is Mandy Matney this is True Sunlight, a podcast exposing crime and corruption previously known as the Murdaugh Murders podcast. True Sunlight is a Luna Shark production written with journalist Liz Farrell. Well, hello from Myrtle Beach. We just got back from Mica Miller's family press conference at the Horry County Courthouse, and I have a lot of emotions to sort through right now. Mostly I'm furious. I'm furious for Mica, who we're going to start referring to as Mica Francis as much as possible, and we will explain that later in this episode. But also I am furious for Mica's family. And for every woman who has fought the same fight with the system working against them at every turn. I am furious that Mica's family had to stand there today in the hot blistering South Carolina sun to share Michael's story and educate the public on coercive control, in hopes that laws can be changed and that other women like Mica can be saved. There are no do overs to this tragedy. They can win in civil court, and maybe they can win in the state house with Mica's bill. But none of that brings their beloved Mica back. None of it makes the pain of losing her any easier. None of it will bring them the light that Mica had on their lives. What happened to them was final. All they can do is help protect other Mica's out there in bad situations who might be experiencing coercive control and don't even realize it. All they can do is pick up the pieces that she left behind and expose those responsible for her life ending the way that it did. All they can do is finish the fight that might have started a long time ago, the fight to escape and eventually expose JP Miller. All they can do is share the painful details of Mica's story in hopes that the world wakes up. And maybe one day passes

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Mica's bill. How can what happened to Mica possibly be illegal? How much evidence of horrific behavior do we have to see until someone is in handcuffs? How come the punishment for stealing from Walmart is so much more clear cut and defined than the punishment is for mentally tormenting someone to the point that they feel like death is the only option. How come coercive control, a pattern of behavior used to dominate, manipulate and intimidate another person as Attorney Regina Ward described it today isn't a common term in our legislation? I want to talk about torment and coercive control for a minute today, because I'll be honest, I didn't really hear of that term much until I started listening to Laura Richards podcast Crime Analyst. You can hear our conversation about coercive control on Cup of Justice episode 63. In today's press conference, Mica Miller's family attorney Regina Ward told reporters about how Mica's family wants to change the course of control bill in South Carolina to Mike us bill with a few adaptations. You see, as Regina explained today, this bill could have possibly saved Mica's life by giving police officers a roadmap for what to look for and abuse cases. But unfortunately, this bill has also been collecting dust in the judiciary committee since 2020. That doesn't surprise me at all, because honestly, our legislator is wildly corrupt, mostly male, and quite frankly, this bill could be bad news for many of them. But besides that, the course of control bill probably didn't get a lot of steam because it didn't have a specific name, face and story. be attached to it showing people exactly what course of control looks like in the tragic consequences of it. So one Wednesday, Regina Ward and Mica Miller's family presented Mica's bill to the public. They released purple packets of information to reporters and sent them to state representatives with Mica's name, face, story and Mica's list attached to it. Mica's list is a stomach turning five page document of unbelievably painful allegations that Mica made about JP and were discovered through her writings and journals. It is all hard to read. Premium members received these documents last night.

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Please share them. Regina notes that these are allegations and that JP hasn't been charged with any crimes related to Mica ever. But I want to go over a few of these allegations. Because blanket terms like abuse and torture, just don't quite move the needle and get people fighting for Mica like they should. This list might change the game for how we look at coercive control as a society. This list is divided into two parts. The first part lists 15 coercive control behaviors alleged by Mica that are already included in the bill followed by examples. We're gonna go over this list again and in a more detailed way but I want to talk about a few of these and give the examples that were written to give you all an idea of what I'm talking about. And trigger warning. This stuff is hard to hear. One item says depriving her of basic needs. It says the JP would not let Mica sleep. He kept her up all night and he pulled the covers off of her every time that she dozed off. And claims that he threw her clothes on the front lawn of their home. And he would allegedly incessantly wake her up screaming to the point that she had to sleep in her car at times. Another behavior listed is expressing her worthlessness. It claims that JP told Mica that she was lazy and mentally ill, that her breasts were too small, that her family was ignorant, and that she wasn't a Christian woman if she ever questioned him, or didn't submit to his dark secrets, humiliated, degraded and dehumanized her. It alleged the JP forced Mica to submit to humiliating sexual acts that disgusted and hurt her. The document alleges that he would tell her that she was mentally ill and have her hospitalized against her will. Another behavior on this list, threats to reveal or publish private information. The example claims that JP would make videos of Mica in private and threatened to upload them if she didn't do what he wanted. And finally, this one rape. According to Mica while she was hospitalized, JP demanded that she have sex with him while she lay in a hospital bed. The document claims that JP forced her to perform sexual acts against her will, and demanded that she watched him and sexual acts with others while

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preaching on Sunday, that it was her job as a wife to always submit. So those were some of the things on the list that the original coercive control bill included. Then there is another list that includes behavior Mica alleged that were suggested to be added to the course of control bill. One of those is cruelty to her dog. Another one destruction of supporting evidence, another misuse of legal documents, misuse of law enforcement, misuse of the legal process, but the one on this list that stuck out to me was medical abuse. It says that JP declared Mica bipolar, forced her to take lithium, a prescription of his own, monitored, whether she complied with taking the pills and would forcefully give her steroid and testosterone shots and her arms, thighs and buttocks. JP would allegedly make her swallow pills. If he thought she didn't take them. He would cut them up and put them in her food. Who I know it's hard to hear. But we need to hear these details. It is maddening to think that in the eyes of our law right now, a lot of those things listed above don't qualify as being black and white illegal. We will talk more about Michael's law later in this episode and a lot More episodes down the road because it is important. As Regina Ward said, we have to educate people, especially lawmakers on problems that they might be minimizing simply because they never heard details like this to explain a problem like course of control.

### **Regina Ward** 10:20

This is a given. A tool that they need. There needs to be education about what course of control is. Someone who has not lived in it or been a part of it sometimes has a difficulty wrapping their mind around what this is. Coercive control is basically like psychological warfare, it will damage the very soul of a person. It will make them doubt and lose their self confidence, and especially their self worth. And they'll give up now and give up on being happy. And they'll survive and trudge through day by day. Or maybe they want what this family wants you to do is to help

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this. We want Mike as law. We want the coercive control bill to be looked at and taken seriously. Put some time into it.

**Liz Farrell** 11:18

Real quick, let's talk about former Colleton County Clerk of Court Becky Hill. I know I know who wants to talk about her. Definitely not us. We would much prefer that Becky and all of her drama were in our rearview mirror. But Becky being Becky there's always more. Last week we finally got to find out the results of her ethics investigation and it's not good. The South Carolina Ethics Commission charged her with 76 counts, most of which were violations of the South Carolina code of ethics that barred Becky from using her official office as a way to enrich herself. Again, Becky's ethics violations have nothing to do with Alex Murdaugh's accusations of jury tampering. Other than the fact that they were discovered because it was Alex who lifted the lid on her proverbial garbage can Becky's hearing won't be held until right before Christmas. Now, why is that? Either the Ethics Commission schedule is super backed up or Dick Jim and Alex have plans to dress up as the three wise men and gift us with yet another Becky associated stunt. And I'd say the chance of that happening is actually 50/50 which I'll explain in a second. Let's talk about what Becky is being charged with. First, I want to mention that in South Carolina, our ethics commission is basically as effective as tattling on your brother for sneaking Oreos out of the pantry. Nothing really happens to your brother. Everyone's kind of annoyed at you for being a narc. And he just goes back to sneaking the Oreos, except, instead of a delicious cookie. We're talking about the public's money here and the misuse thereof which doesn't often bother the good old boys as long as they're the ones doing it. At any rate, the consequence of the commission being about as effective as siblings tattling on each other is pretty significant. The Ethics Commission is wildly haphazard in its enforcement. It's really rare for the Ethics

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Commission to initiate its own investigations. Most of them, including Becky's, start with quote, citizen complaints getting filed. And I say citizen complaints in quotation marks because we're not just talking about average Joe's filing complaints all the time. Complaint filing is actually a favorite tool of political enemies trying to inconvenience and embarrass each other. So the process does get misused. In Becky's case, there are two complaints, one was filed by her former deputy clerk. The commission found 74 violations there and the other was filed by the husband of a 14th circuit Solicitor's Office prosecutor. As you know, the 14th circuit is Murdock country. So enough said there, the commission found two violations from his complaint. The bottom line here is that there are likely ethics violations in every corner of South Carolina's government offices in every corner of the state's courthouses too. But the commission basically only looks into the cases that they're guided toward. For years, newspapers in the state have called for a more serious and consequential ethics commission but you know how the good old boys love nothing more than pretending that there's a system of accountability in place when really it's just for show. At least when it comes to them. Now, Becky's garbage can Alex took the lid off and there is so much trash and I'd say we should be thanking him but he deserves no gratitude. First, there's around 10,000 dollars in bonuses that she allegedly paid herself using money that was meant for Family Court. This one should be interesting because as part of her response to the initial complaints that were filed over the summer, she provided an email and other information that she says proves she was allowed to give bonuses to herself and her staff from that money. So I guess we'll find out about that one. Aside from the bonuses there's an accusation that she basically traded the use of a courtroom and an interview in exchange for promotion for her book. She's also being charged for her use of that photo of Alex reading John Grisham and excel as he was awaiting his verdict, the one that got posted on social media by her co

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author. And then there's the 10 or so \$1,000 She allegedly spent on office parties holiday celebrations and lunches. Now mention of these parties and holiday celebrations and lunches are only now coming to light. These were not accusations that were made against her over the summer. In one instance, she threw a going away party for a 14th circuit solicitor's office employee. She was allegedly really generous with tax money for that party. She reportedly bought Jagermeister and lemon cello to celebrate. And again that party wasn't mentioned in the complaint from the husband of the 14th circuit solicitor prosecutor. Then there was a Smirnoff Ice she bought for clerk of court employees to celebrate someone's birthday. The Ethics Commission report is oddly specific in certain areas, but lacking details and others, for instance, Becky apparently loves to celebrate a holiday at the courthouse. Don't even get Mandy started on the reimbursement Becky allegedly took for Becky's words, Easter goodies. Becky bought food and staff gifts for Mother's Day, Father's Day, Valentine's Day. Oh, that brings us back to my 50/50 prediction of Becky's hearing being scheduled for Christmas time because of Dick, Jim and Alex having a three unwise men plan. According to the Ethics Commission Report, Becky bought Valentine's Day gifts for clerk of court employees and jurors. Yeah, count number 52. And Laura Hayes complaint says, Becky bought gifts for jurors. Surely not right. Surely this can't be in reference to the Murdaugh jury? I don't know the answer to that, because there's no date attached to the incident. However, we all know what jury was convened during Valentine's Day, at least Valentine's Day of last year. So what does this mean? Are we going to see more nonsense from Team Murdaugh about heart shaped Snickers bars or whatever it is she bought? And why didn't this come up before? Like we said on Cup of Justice this week, it seems like this would be something that Dick and Jim would have used to their absolute advantage during Alex's hearing for a new trial earlier this year, because why would she buy anything for any

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jurors? Obviously, we don't really have a whole lot of room here to say it was probably harmless even though it was likely harmless because it's not a good look. It's a terrible look. And good God, Becky, please tell us this is the end. Tell us there's not more. No clerk of court should be in the news this much. That said, we all know Becky isn't the only public official out there acting like Michael Scott's party planning committee. So now would be a good time for more lids to get lifted off of more garbage cans. You know how the saying goes? If you see something, say something.

**Mandy Matney** 18:47

Okay, before we talk about escaping JP Miller, we have a quick update on something we reported last week. In this case we told you about how confused we were when we asked the Horry County Register of Deeds office for the receipt from the filing of Mica Miller's health care power of attorney, the one she signed in December 2022. On the day that she was released from being hospitalized at the Walker Moss Center for Health. Mica's sister had brought her to the hospital and Mica's husband JP threw a fit and tried to take Mica away from there before police intervention. The healthcare power of attorney gave JP complete control over Mica should she become mentally incapacitated, and he was so angry about Mica's family being able to successfully separate her from him so that she could get help that he went to a lawyer and made an effort to make sure that that never happened again. We also told you about how that POA didn't get filed until March of 2024 when Mica was trying to escape JP and build her life in when she was routinely reporting him to please for harassment and waiting on a hearing for motion for a restraining order that she had submitted against him. Our confusion came from the fact that Mica's name and address of the apartment, where she moved after leaving JP appeared on the receipt as a customer, meaning it appeared that she was the one

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who filed the POA, which again, made no sense whatsoever. Why would she be giving JP control over whether she lived or died? Should she become mentally incapacitated? Why would she risk giving JP the opportunity to paint her as mentally incapacitated so that the POA would take effect? Reporter Beth Braden called over to the Horry County Register of Deeds office this week to get more information about that receipt. What we can tell you for sure right now is that the Register of Deeds office does not ask for identification. We told you a few weeks ago that anyone can file another person's POA. It doesn't have to be the person whose POA it is. This is all to say that even though it looks like Mica Miller filed that POA herself, it's also possible that someone else did. Knowing that an ID would not be required. We are still getting more information about this. And we think that it is important if someone else filed the POA in the midst of Mica trying to escape an abusive relationship. Well, obviously that raises another set of questions. And if Mica did file that herself, that clearly raises more questions, such as what she tricked into filing. Did she get gaslit into doing it, or what she threatened. We will keep you posted on what we find out there.

**Liz Farrell** 22:04

This week has been an eventful one in the Mica Miller case starting with the hearing that was scheduled to be held Wednesday afternoon from Mica's family's motion for temporary relief. After Mica died her family acted quickly to step in and stop JP and His Church Solid Rock ministries from moving on as if nothing happened from moving on without consequence. They immediately filed to have Mica SR Sierra appointed as a special administrator of Mica's est. Sierra is a sister who Mica went to visit in Gaffney in November 2022. After her fight with JP they had to call 911 twice because JP was texting them with threats, including that he was on his way to Sierra's house, armed and ready to

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take Mica back. As part of her effort to become special administrator Ciara and her brother Nathaniel both filed affidavits which gave the world the first look into what Mica's marriage to JP look like, and at the fear that Mica was living in leading up to her death in April, after a judge agreed to Sierra's appointment, Sierra, on behalf of Mica filed this motion for temporary relief. Essentially, Sierra is handling unfinished business here and she's trying to get back Mica's possession such as her car, cell phone and her purse which are being held as evidence by the Robeson County Sheriff's Office and under normal circumstances would be given to JP. Sierra is not letting JP benefit from like a staff nor is she going to let him control the narrative. So let's talk a little bit about Mica's attempts to escape JP before she died. In October, she filed for a fault divorce. In her filing, she told the court that she wanted a divorce from JP on the grounds of adultery. She also asked for a hearing for temporary relief, basically a hearing that would protect her financial interests during their separation. In South Carolina, a fault divorce is granted much more quickly than a no fault divorce. A no fault divorce is basically irreconcilable differences. For that kind of divorce where you don't really have to get into the more private details of your relationship. You have to first live apart from your spouse for a year. Mica clearly wanted out of her relationship with JP But a month later asked for the hearing to be delayed because according to the filing, she and JP were potentially going to be able to work out the details of their separation. Now here's the thing. We're going to say according to the filing a lot here. We know that both JP and members of his church had significant influence over Mica's thinking after she filed for divorce. It's so easy to look at the documents and say, Oh, that's because they were working things out. But we're not going to jump to that conclusion. Mica's divorce filing timeline is unusual. And we think that's a huge reflection on what she was going through personally, with JP and the members of his congregation who are encouraging her to give him another

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chance. So, while there's a filing that says the parties were working things out, we don't actually know if that was case. We do know that Mica went to Kenya during that time and felt pressure from JP's congregants to give him another chance. But we don't know how long that chance lasted. In February, after the couple had purportedly separated again, and after JP had Mica involuntarily hospitalized. They both filed to dismiss Mica as October filing for divorce. Again, to the outside I that would look like they have reconciled and we're going to try again. But that is not the case. Because at this very same time Mica has agreed to dismiss the divorce filing that called out JP for his adultery. JP was filing a motion of temporary relief against Mica. Did he trick her into dismissing the original divorce? Did he pressure her to do it? In his filing, JP asked the court for exclusive use and possession of their marital home, which is interesting, because as you'll hear, in February 2024 JP no longer technically owns that house, but we'll get into that. He wanted the court to give him exclusive use of the Honda Accord, which was in Mica's name only. And the car that he took from Mica when she was hospitalized and the car that she called police about after she checked herself out of the hospital two days later and realized it was gone. You'll remember that JP told the police that contrary to what Mica was telling them, they were not separated at that time, and that the current question was marital property. And in both their names, obviously, neither of those things were true at the time. In his filing, JP also asked the court for a no adverse contact order, which would basically bar Mica and him from engaging in any adverse conduct against the other whether directly or indirectly, which think about the goal of that. Now that we've seen all of Mica's police reports and heard from his friends and family about what she was going through at the time, JP was asking the court to prevent her from harming and stalking him to prevent her from posting negative social media posts about him or anyone he was stating. It's interesting

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because he's basically accusing her of his own behavior. He was using the system as a weapon against her, all the while psychologically torturing her behind the scenes from what sources have told us. I want to take a second to say this. There have been no actual accusations from JP that Mica is doing anything to him. There's one police report that we've seen where he tried to tell police that Mica's video talking about abuse was akin to harassment against him. But the police were like, No, that's not harassment. She doesn't even mention you at all, pal. We do, however, have multiple instances of word Mica was reaching out for help from the police, to get them to stop him from stalking and harassing her to get them to understand that she was fearful for her own life. But here JP is trying to get it on the record and insinuate that he was the victim in this. He got her to dismiss her first divorce and then turned around and filed this against her. Less than a month later, he dropped his case. Then, after struggling to get money to hire a lawyer, Michael was finally able to file for divorce again, this time, she did not mention the adultery. And we think that's what JP was after all along according to his first divorce, not having his adultery mentioned as grounds for divorce was important to him because once again, he did not want to lose congregants, he did not want to lose receipts. In other words, he didn't want to compromise the amount of money coming into his church every week. Okay, so obviously, Mica did not get to continue with her divorce against JP. Again, this is where Sierra comes in. Wednesday's hearing was going to be to ask the court for several orders, including one for separate maintenance and support, basically, to acknowledge that the couple was no longer together and to get financial protections on Mica's behalf. Mica relied on JP for his salary; she worked at the church too but earned very little money. At the time of her death. She was working as a waitress after they separated again on February 6 of this year, and JP immediately had Mica involuntarily hospitalized in a mental institution. He took her car that

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Honda Accord that he later asked the court to give him what's so frustrating about this is that the car was in Mica's name but when Mica called police after checking herself out of the hospital two days later, police believed JP story that the car was in both of their names and therefore marital property. So, in the midst of all of this having defined and pay for an apartment and start from absolute scratch financially, along with getting enough money together to get legal help to escape JP, Mica had no car to get herself to work. JP cruelly took away a critical lifeline from her. In her filing, Sierra also asked the court to determine what assets and debts were considered marital, and nonmarital so that they could be split up equitably. She also asked the court to determine whether the house Mica and JP lived in was considered marital property and to determine whether JP and his Church Solid Rock ministries had conspired to deprive Mica of this asset. Why? Because after Mica filed for divorce in October 2023, JP sold the house, which was in his name only to the church for much less than the actual value of the house. We need to take a little marriage timeline break here so we can put all of this into context for you. As you know, Mica joined JP's church when she was 15. And he was 30 and married with five kids. He had one kid from a relationship he had when he was 17 years old, plus four kids from his first marriage to Allison Williams. When Mica was 18 she married a member of the church who was also JP's best friend, according to court records, JP was the officiant of their wedding. Then in 2015, the congregation discovered that Mica, who worked for the church and as a babysitter for JPS kids, and JP were having an affair. That summer Mica divorced her husband and JP separated from his wife. In divorce papers, he repeatedly listed himself as not having an address. We'll talk more about his divorce from Allison in a future episode. But as part of that JP had to pay Alison \$2,000 a month in alimony and child support. About \$1,100 of that was for the mortgage of the home they own together. The home was the biggest asset and

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because of what JP did, they now had to figure out what to do with it. The decision was for Alison to stay in the house and raise their children in the home that they were used to. JP paid her enough alimony to afford the mortgage when he paid the alimony. Because, of course that wasn't simple, but we'll get to that in the future. JP had to issue a quitclaim to Alison so that the house would only be in her name. And the arrangement had it so that when Alison sold the house, JP and she would split the equity. The house was important to JP now, Mica and JP did not end up getting married until 2017. And he bought the house they lived in together in January 2016. The house though was purchased in JP's name and the name of another man, Kirk Hammer. It's not clear what Kirk's relationship to JP's in November 2020, after he was married to Mica, JP had the house transferred to him, not him and Mica, just him. And according to the court filing he took out a purchase money mortgage for more than \$200,000. What's a purchase money mortgage? It's a good question. It's when the seller of a property finances the sale for the borrower, meaning the loan was in through a bank. Then in July 2021 JP took out another mortgage against the property for \$208,587. According to court records, two mortgages Yeah, it appears that way. Because it wasn't until December 2023, two months after Mica filed for a divorce, telling the court about JP's adultery that he satisfied both mortgages somehow according to the filing. Ostensibly JP paid for those two mortgages using marital funds. Additionally, while Michael lived in the house, the couple invested \$90,000 In upgrades and improvements according to documents. Now, December 2023, is when JP sold his and Mica's house to the church. In her filing, Sierra puts the word sold in quotation marks because it's her contention that this was not a valid sale. In fact, she believes it was an attempt to defraud and deprive Mica from her fair share of the marital asset. On May 16, Sierra filed a lis pendens against the property, which essentially tags the house legally and makes it difficult for the church to do



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anything further with the property until this matter is settled. On Wednesday, Sierra had also planned to ask the court to restrain JP from abusing, harming, harassing, communicating, threatening or otherwise interfering with CO and the rest of Mica's family and friends. And she was going to ask the court to bar JP from sharing any photos, videos communications, including private or provocative photos, videos and communications, on social media or through any other means. She also wanted the court to prevent him from doing any of them anonymously or through a third party. Additionally, she was going to ask the court to stop JP from wasting any of the marital assets and to keep him from accruing any additional marital debt until a final order was issued. In her filing, Sierra was also asking the court to grant Mica a posthumous name change. Mica thought to have her name restored to Mica Acacia Francis when she filed her own divorce papers. This is a big deal. And even though we understand that this case is known nationally as the Mica Miller case, we're going to try to start referring to her as Mica Francis as much as possible. Mica should not have to carry around the last name of a man who did so much damage to her. So in the court of true sunlight or restoring Mica to her pre JP identity, it's the very least anyone could do for her. Okay, there are three more things Sierra asked the court to do. One was to order JP to offer a financial accounting of the past three years and to appoint a financial forensic expert that JP would pay for to do a separate investigation to order JP to pay their legal fees and three was to order the same from the church. So going into Wednesday, there was a lot on the docket. But Wednesday morning, we started to hear rumblings that the hearing might not happen for a few reasons, one of which was that it seemed like the parties had come to some sort of resolution. By Wednesday afternoon the case had been removed from the docket altogether. Mandy and David were at the courthouse so they were there when a press conference was held instead, outside of the courthouse with Mica's



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attorney Regina B Ward and Mica's family where they discussed their agreement with JP and his attorneys. According to Regina Ward, the Robeson County Sheriff's Office is now going to give Mica's family all the items they took into evidence when they found her body in April. So that's great. The car will be returned to the woman who helped Mica by co-signing a loan for her in March. Both parties also agreed to mutual restraining orders, meaning JP is now barred from contacting them, and they are barred from contacting him. Regina was careful to note that people shouldn't assume that these restraining orders meant that anyone was harassing or threatening the other party. We want to note that it was Mica's family asking for the restraining order and it's no surprise that JP would want the same thing to level the field. In addition, all parties have agreed to hold off on deciding anything about the other issues for now, including, like his name change. Perhaps the most important part of the press conference, though, was the announcement that Regina and the Frances family are now working toward creating Mica's law, a law that would criminalize coercive control in South Carolina. A bill was introduced in the South Carolina House and Senate in 2020. That would have criminalized quote, The act or pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation, manipulation and intimidation or other abuse, including emotional abuse that is used to harm, punish or frighten the victim by fraudulent representations. It basically expands the idea that domestic violence is solely a physical act of abuse. But that bill failed. Regina said that had it passed in 2020, JP would have been arrested because the police would have had a law to follow. They wouldn't have been able to just throw up their hands and act like there was nothing they could do about it, which we still think there were things law enforcement could have done to help Mica. Regina said that as part of their pursuit of a coercive control law. They want to include a misuse of legal documents clause that would criminalize the use of the legal system for purposes of intimidation and control. This is where we

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should remind you about the police reports that Solid Rock appears to have filed against Mica, accusing her of stealing from them even after it looked like a judge had declined to issue a warrant declaring that no crime had been committed. This accusation weighed on Mica. We told you a few weeks ago about how Mica had spoken with the FBI about apparent financial anomalies at the church and how she was convinced that JP and his enablers would try to pin it on her. We'll talk a lot more about coercive control laws in the future. But we'll say this for now. It's a much needed law and it's going to take a big village to help get this passed. And you know why? Because the coercive control law will protect women, and it will really mess up bad men. And we all know that our mostly male legislators across the country, really hate laws that they can picture being used against them because they know their own behavior toward women over the years hasn't been so great because they hate giving women any control over their own safety. So this wasn't the only hearing scheduled this week for this case. On Thursday morning, a judge was expected to hear emergency arguments from JPs first wife, Allison Williams, as to why she should be granted full custody of their two minor children for now. This one is a doozy because with her motion, Allison bravely filed an affidavit that confirms a lot about what was happening behind the scenes with JP and Mica. Before we get into that though, here's a fun fact. The lawyer that Allison used to escape JP Sandy Hicks was with the same badass law firm that represented Mica in her April divorce filing and is now representing Mica sister and family who are acting on her behalf. Alison is still repped by Sandy, who has since moved on to her own law firm. This is all just to say women power and that these attorneys have likely heard it all about JP. Okay, so in her filing, asking for an emergency hearing, Allison told the court that she has a quote, voluminous amount of evidence to support the concerns and allegations in her complaint. But that quote, until such time as proper safety measures are in place.

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I'm strictly limiting the amount of information which is interesting because there's actually a lot of information in this affidavit. First, she recounts what led to her divorce, which again will tell you more about in a future episode. Quote, we separated after I learned JP was having an adulterous affair with our former nanny, Mica Miller, who joined our church at the age of 15 was married to JP's best friend who is also on our church staff and serving as our church worship leader at the time of their affair. JP told me that in addition to his affair with Mica, he had employed prostitutes, and been sexually inappropriate with several underage female members of our church. He blamed his immoral sexual behaviors on the sexual abuse he experienced for years by his father, Wayne Miller.

### **Mandy Matney** 42:39

So there's a lot to unpack. We told you a little about JP's father last week and the multiple allegations against him, which include soliciting sex with a male undercover police officer at a bathhouse in Myrtle Beach, and employing foreign students at his Bible College to work for him for little to no pay. We don't know of any formal molestation accusations that have been made against Wayne Miller, including from JP and we are obligated to mention that he has not been charged in any child sexual abuse cases. And we also know that there's a video circulating on social media about Wayne in Pakistan and improper behavior, but those accusations have not been verified as far as we know. But back to Allison's affidavit. After JP Miller's affair with Mica became known, the church apparently asked him to enroll in an extensive sexual addiction program, which according to Allison, he promised he would. But to her knowledge that never happened. According to Alison, the affair tore her family and the church apart. A quote caused an unimaginable amount of pain and discord in the lives of so many innocent people who truly trusted and believed in JP. Now here is where it gets more interesting.

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We have told you about how worried JP was about the effect Mica Miller's departure would have on his church. According to sources, he was very worried that word would get out that he was cheating on Mica, and that Mica would reveal even more details about his sex life that would result in him again, losing his congregation, which is what happened and 2015 after the affair was discovered, but it is not so simple to say that JP is flocked scattered back then because of the affair that he had with Mica. According to Allison's affidavit, this is what happened. The church went to JP to step down temporarily to get treatment, the church council relying on amended bylaws that gave them the authority to do this order JP to do so, but after they voted, JP then held a meeting and informed them that the new bylaws were invalid. And according to the old bylaws, he had 100% decision making authority. Here's what Allison wrote about that, quote, that was the first time members of the church had an opportunity to see JP for who He really was, and became gravely concerned about how his integrity and the financial structure of the church. As a result, almost our entire congregation left the church, and JP began his quest to recruit new members, and operate solid rock ministries solely at his discretion.

### **Liz Farrell** 45:39

So that brings us to the now right, this puts the now in better perspective. JP wasn't just scared of what a divorce from Mica might do to the number of church members. This was a different church altogether, from when Alison belong to it. This was a church that JP had built in JP, his likeness, a church that recognized JPS authority in a much less distilled way than the previous church. If JP were to lose those numbers, the people he had curated for His church, then what would he have left? JP is this church, and this church is JP. Now, back in 2015, when Allison learned about JPS, inappropriate behavior with minor female members of the church, and I'm saying inappropriate



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behavior here not to gloss over the details, but simply because we don't know them. Allison says she went to the girls and asked them to come forward. The girls told her what happened but said they were too scared of JP to tell police and testify in court according to the affidavit, quote, when I learned they were too fearful to report JP I went to the police department for the purpose of making a report and requesting an investigation. However, I was in essence, told by police officials that nobody would believe me because JP was a well known pastor, and we were in the middle of a divorce. So that's terrific, right? The police apparently weren't even receptive to hearing about the potential and apparently unreported abuse happening at an area church. I know your next question is going to be like, what about the church elders? Weren't they required to report this abuse after JP told them about it? Yeah, but we have not seen any evidence thus far that they did. So. Here's what Allison says happened. Next, quote, I began to realize the power JP seemed to have over leaders and officials in our community. And based upon having limited power, there was no way for me to ensure JP was held accountable, and prevented from continuing to victimize innocent people. Given the circumstances, I decided the best way for me to protect our children was to reach an agreement with JP that contained terms I believed would ensure their safety and encourage him to seek treatment. To that end, JP had periodic periods of visitation with our children. However, we agreed JP's visitation with our daughter, who is a subject to this action would be restricted to solely daytime periods of visitation. So according to this JP hasn't been allowed to have his now teenage daughter for overnight visits because of his history with teenage girls. Alison's affidavit also gives us insight into her relationship with Mica who had been very close to the Miller family prior to the affair. Alison so she taught Mica to drive and took her to get her driver's license and that Mica shared many mealtimes with the family. Allison says that she provided Mica with guidance and advice and that Mica

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started working for the church around that same time. In her affidavit, Alison writes, despite the initial destruction caused by JP's infidelity for several years, there was a part of me that was relieved to know Mica would be present in the home when JP had periods of visitation with our children. And I viewed her as a safety net for my children. So having Mica there was a big deal for Alison despite and because of the history of their relationship. For a while things weren't so tumultuous, she says, But then things changed in 2021 and 2022. Things change to the detriment of her children. She said, escalating to the quote severity of where things are today. Alison says her children were placed in the middle of JP's marital problems with Mica quote, JP would preach sermons on Sundays our children were with him and present in the congregation disparaging Mica and indicating she had mental health issues and eventually putting her in a mental hospital. The children were subjected to JP calling like a crazy one day and then her being back in the home at their next visit with their father, assuring them she was fine. They never knew what to expect, and the intense unpredictability and marital discord between JP and Mica negatively impacted them all. On one occasion while picking up our daughter, I observed holes in their walls, hinges off the doors and pieces of paper taped to the walls with negative affirmations about Mica. JP told me in our children that Mica was delusional and speaking different languages and seeing things that were not there. Okay, obviously, we don't know for sure. But reading between the lines, it seems like Alison is saying that the environment was bad, not because of Mica's mental health, but because of what JP was saying about Mica's mental health. Notice how she doesn't say your children witnessed any of this supposed behavior. But can you imagine telling children these things about their stepmother and then expecting them not to have worries or questions about it? Sources tell us that Mica really cared for her stepchildren, and the two younger ones in particular, really cared about her. This is scary

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stuff for kids to have to contend with. Okay, so then Allison's affidavit gets even more interesting. Quote, JP began spending time with his new paramore. Susie? Yes, Alison went there. Now those of you have been following the story really closely and social media might recognize the name Susie. JP was pictured with Susie shortly after Mica's death, reportedly having an apparently good time at a local restaurant. In addition, Robeson County Sheriff's Office put in their press release about Mica's death that at the time of Mica's death, JP was with a romantic interest in Charleston. And there are a lot of rumors about JP and Susie and Susie's deceased husband. Let's hear what Allison has to say about JP and Susie, whose son played soccer with JP and Alison Sutton. Quote, JP began using our son to facilitate times he could spend with Susie, which our children were well aware of. Their friends talked about it and it caused them a tremendous amount of embarrassment. When I learned JP was exposing our children to yet another one of his adulterous affairs. I confronted JP and Susie and told them not to let it happen again. JP called me the day Susie's husband died in an alleged drowning accident, extremely upset and asking me to pray, which was incredibly bizarre, based on information and belief. Just two weeks prior to this incident, Susie's husband had confronted JP and asked him to leave his wife and children alone. It is chilling to know that the spouses of both Susie and JP are now dead from tragic events, and to quote Whoa, right. So Susie's husband was 40 year old Chris Skinner. He was in a car crash involving a drunk driver at age 20 and was paralyzed from the chest down. According to news reports, he was a motivational speaker and had written books, and he was an adaptive surfer meaning even though he was quadriplegic he enjoyed surfing and the water, meaning he was comfortable around the water. In September 2021. He was found unresponsive in his neighborhood pool. He drowned to death. His death was ruled accidental. On social media people have insinuated that there's more to Chris's death and

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that it needed to be investigated back then. It needs to be reinvestigated today. Allison Williams JP's former wife has now put it on the record that she also believes something strange was afoot here. She says that it was around the time of Christmas death. The JPS mental health began to spiral out of control and he began acting even more bizarre. Quote, he informed me that he was getting into buying guns and shooting and he had purchased a gun safe for his home. As a convicted felon. He is not allowed to have weapons however, he managed to get a police chief from the church to assist with expunging his record. Further, he was given a special police badge that says pastor to utilize if he ever gets pulled over. So they will let him go. A badge you guys sound familiar. I remember when we all found out that Alex Murdaugh had been carrying around not just one, but two badges from the 14th circuit Solicitor's Office and driving around with blue lights on his truck for no good reason. Good old boys never grow up. And it's always surprising to find out just how much the system enables them with these pseudo VIP experiences on the taxpayer dime. According to the Public Index, JP has a long history of traffic infractions. In addition, one of the charges he had pardoned in 2022 was for getting caught driving under suspension for the third time.

### **Mandy Matney** 55:08

Speaking of that, pardon, JP Miller was pardoned for driving under suspension, an assault and battery of a high and aggravated nature. Shortly after Chris' death in 2021, and after 22 years of being a convicted felon, JP sought this pardon so that he could have his rights restored. His rights being the right to vote, which he did not mention on his application, and his right to legally own firearms, which he definitely alludes to on his application. We now have audio from JP's pardon hearing. And to be clear, his charges were never expunged according to the Public Index. That is a separate process that wholly eliminates the



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charges from his record. We will get into all of that in a later episode, because as we showed y'all and Murdaugh time and time again, it is important to take a closer look at every single time that the system gave men like JP Miller, a green light, and told him that he could get away with a little bit more if he just asked.

### **Liz Farrell** 56:20

Okay, back to Allison's affidavit and JP's purported new interest in firearms. She writes with the constant discord between JP and Mica and JP's own self reported mental health struggles. The thought of JP having access to guns in his house terrified me for the safety of our children. According to Alison right as she was considering legal action to amend their custody arrangement, JP told her that he wasn't mentally well enough to share time with their children. Having a BJP idea made it far easier and safer, she wrote, notice her use of the word safe throughout this entire affidavit. It's super important. All Mica wanted was to be safe. All Allison wants for herself and her children is to be safe. And both women simply just want to JP to get better, to be better, but they couldn't be safe within the confines of his world. Around the time of Chris Skinner's death, and after JP's bizarre behavior began to emerge. Alison said that Mica began calling her and Mica wanted advice on how to leave JP she said. For the rest of this episode, I want you to keep elements from Mica's list that Mandy shared with you at the beginning of the episode at the top of your mind. According to the affidavit, Mica turned to Alison, the two women prayed together and Mica told Allison more about what was going on with JP about what Allison's children were being exposed to. When they were at their house, Mica warned Alison that her children were in danger in his care. And now that Mica is dead. Alison is even more worried because the one safety net she felt she had with JP that Mica was there. And that Mica cared is gone. Quote, I was married to JP for 16 years. Although my





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story and what I lived through with JP is different in some ways. Many of the details shared with me by Mica are so similar to my own experiences with JP that I know she was being truthful based upon information and belief. JP's mental health and deviant sexual addictions have only worsened since the time we were married.

### **Mandy Matney** 58:31

After Mica died, Allison said she initially allowed her kids to speak with JP over the phone and through text messages, but she recently found out that he had been talking to their kids about the chaos of his life right now. She said he shared plans with the kids of suing everyone and being a millionaire. You'll remember that after this story broke in early May JP issued a statement through an attorney threatening media and ordinary citizens on Tik Tok and other social media telling them that he was cataloging every post for future legal action. So in this affidavit, Alison said that she hasn't made any statements publicly about JP because her kids have been negatively affected by all of the media surrounding this case. She notes that JP has been threatened and followed on social media by people around the world and that JP has a history of expressing suicidal ideation. She rightly points out that this is just not a good environment for the kids to be in right now that all this combined with his emotional instability would put them in imminent danger. On Thursday morning, Alison will be asking the court to suspend all contact between JP and her children pending JP undergoing a full psychological examination and a parental fitness examination. And then following whatever recommendations come from that she is also asking the court to appoint a guardian ad litem to conduct an expedited investigation into the matter. Now, Alison came to the table with serious receipts. Even though she says she is holding back until she gets reassurance from the court that she and her kids will be safe. Included and the receipts are videos of her kids fighting



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against visitation with their father, a video of JP admitting to suicidal thoughts mental health issues in his use of lithium, a voicemail from Mica seeking guidance and evidencing severe emotional turmoil with JP social media posts regarding admissions from JP related to instability and mental health issues as well as screenshots from text messages. Those text messages include one incredibly disturbing one, where JP purportedly used his young daughter's cell phone to text Mica while pretending to be his daughter. We don't know the exact date of this text message, but Mica references that she is 30 and JP mentioned that it's her birthday, Mica turned 30 in March so this was after JP appears to have pressure her to drop the divorce only to file one of his own. And after JP had Mica hospitalized involuntarily after he took her car, I will read some of the texts between JPS daughter's phone and Mica. I posted the rest on my Instagram account. A text from JP's daughter's phone says that mom says boys are dumb, but I know dad loves you a lot. I've never seen him cry so much. If he asked you we talk about lashes. I have to delete this. Then Mica texted back. I understand. JP's daughter's phone texted Mica. I am praying without dad that you will come home. He is crying so loud right now. Can you talk to him, please? I promise He loves you. He has your pictures all over the house. He won't do anything with us. He just keeps crying. Then Mica texted him. Last time I tried to come home and be peaceful. He called the cops and said I was trying to break in after he was the one who asked me to come. My hands are tied. He would not even let me in JP's daughter's phone texted back. Can I ask him he has done dumb things. But all he does is ask God to bring you home. He doesn't even get out of bed. He just cries. I really liked you with my dad might get texted back. I know it is really hard to stay away. But he has already filed the paperwork. I didn't even file anything. He is leaving me and trying to make it seem like I left him. I don't think it's healthy for you to get involved. Because it



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is a lot for anyone to process. Keep praying. And if you have any questions, tell your mom and I will talk to her.

**Liz Farrell** 1:02:54

I feel like I need to give you guys a second to catch your breath after that. Because this isn't just absolutely unhinged behavior from JP. It's heartbreaking. Not only did JP deceive Mica in these texts and put his daughter or her cell phone anyway, in the middle of this drama. He was horribly manipulative. We can only imagine how Mica must have felt receiving those texts, believing that her stepdaughter was urging her to come home. In addition, we get so much insight from those texts into what a good human being was like a was. The text ended with her telling her fake stepdaughter that it wasn't good for her to be involving herself in this and then directing her fake stepdaughter to talk to her mom. After this it appears that Mica screenshot the texts and sent them to Alison so that Alison would know how her young daughter was being affected by what Mica believed was the truth about her father's emotional breakdown. And more than all of this we get to see the reality of the situation. This is psychological torture, plain and simple. The fake texting the filing paperwork to leave Michael while telling people that Miko was trying to leave him and that he was the victim asking Mike to come home only to call police on her and claim she was trying to break in. Every week we see more and more of the emotional warfare that Miko is being forced to contend with. Let's talk about what we did not see in that text exchange. By the way. We didn't see drama from Mica. She didn't contact her stepdaughter to talk about JP she didn't put down JP she simply stated facts and respected her fake stepdaughters feelings, while also gently redirecting her to her mother. Every glimpse we've gotten into Mica so far shows no evidence of her harassing or stalking JP she was just trying to escape him.



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**Mandy Matney** 1:04:53

And Mica died doing just that, trying to escape him the most dangerous time and In an abused woman's life is the time that she is trying to leave. We have said this over and over and over again. At the press conference Wednesday, several women and justice for Mica T shirts tearfully spoke about how Mica's case hit so close to home for them. Mike, a story has grabbed headlines around the world in the last month for that very reason. Because too many women know a Mica, or new a Mica. And they know just how hard the Escape is. As Mica's team and the FBI continue to investigate, it is important to focus on what we know, happened and prevent it from happening to other people. I applaud Mica's family for leading that effort, when they shouldn't have to here is attorney Regina Ward.

**Regina Ward** 1:05:58

It's not just about Mica, so no one's been forgotten. It's all about victims. We're just asking for it to be called Mica's Law because so many people have paid attention to this situation, all eyes are on it, and people are paying attention. And we really want people to become educated. We want our police to be educated. They're not trained in it, because it doesn't exist in law. They're trying to look for the things they know and law that a crime. Okay, so when we say hold the police accountable, as I stated before, when they arrive on the scene, and you know, a spouse is saying, she took my wallet and won't give it back and has my keys and won't let me leave the house, then the officer is gonna defuse the situation. Okay. And it's a domestic situation, people get in fights, you know, first I mean, that's part of being married to doesn't mean that's all abusive, but sometimes it gets, you know, to a place where someone calls the police because they want something to happen. And so the police will look at it and say, Well, I don't see any bruises on your Sir, I don't see anything like that. That should hurt. Yeah, you know, that sort

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of thing. So if it's not a physical abuse thing, or a physical manifestation of the abuse, the police just don't have anything to look to. So with this bill made into law, of course, I would imagine that there would be some form of training because there'll be a new law that they would have to be familiar with and learn how to identify the elements that are associated with it.

**Mandy Matney** 1:07:35

As we always say, sunlight helps.

**Regina Ward** 1:07:39

We've already got the message out, and Mica's life is going to matter, regardless of whatever the reason was, of why what happened to her. Her life is going to leave a legacy and her life is going to help people. That's where we need to focus now. We need to focus on that because the other things that happened or may happen, we can't undo those. We can't undo those things that happened allegedly happened to Mica, but what we can do is go on forward and being supportive, that hopefully there won't be any other victims that got to this level. If you know, that's where we need to focus now.

**Mandy Matney** 1:08:22

Stay tuned, stay pesky and stay in the sunlight. True Sunlight is a Luna Shark production created by me, Mandy Matney, and co-hosted by journalist Liz Farrell. Learn more about our mission and membership and [lunasharkmedia.com](https://lunasharkmedia.com). Interruptions provided by Luna and Joe Pesky.