



EPISODE 55: From Divorce Court to Pardon Hearings to TikTok - How JP Miller Operates + Dick Harpootlian is a Loser

Mandy Matney 00:02

I don't know if the system will ever catch up to guys like JP Miller, but I am disturbed yet again after taking a closer look at his pattern of behavior revealed in court documents. Now more than ever, I am determined to shine a bright light on coercive control, as sunlight seems to be our biggest hope for passing Mica's law in a state where women are not seen as equal in the eyes of the law. My name is Manny 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 journalists Liz Farrell. We have a lot of ups and downs in this episode, but I want to start with a new feature of the show appreciation for our Luna shark premium members. Thank you to Nikki B, Rhonda M, Patricia B, Evelyn L, and Crystal P for recently becoming Luna Shark premium members. Your support means the world to us. And a big thank you to Melissa B, Jean S, Charles P and Sherry J for being annual members since our launch in December 2022. To learn more about joining Luna Shark premium, please visit lunashark.supercast.com today. And now for the good news. Dick Harpootlian is done in the Senate. He was defeated by Russell Ott in a very close and heated race that stunned South Carolina Tuesday night. But Dick lost a lot more than just his Senate seat on Tuesday night. He lost an immense amount of power too. He lost his power as a lawyer legislator, he lost his power as a man who presented himself as invincible. He was dethroned by his own people in a fair election. Almost three years ago, then Senator Dick Harpootlian walked into a courtroom packed full of reporters scanned the crowd and looked for me, as I was pretty much the only reporter at the time covering the Murdaugh story who wasn't buying into his narrative, and was calling him out consistently on a hot mic. He then asked a pack of journalists if Mandy Matney really exists. And then he followed up by a sexist joke,

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and the media section erupted in laughter, and that moment changed my life. I talk about this in greater detail in my book. At first, when this happened, I felt small and weak. I questioned my abilities as a reporter. I had a panic attack earlier that day, which is why I didn't make it. I was thinking maybe I'm not cut out for this whole reporting thing. But then I realized something Dick was afraid of little old me. And he shouldn't be, he wouldn't have made that hurtful joke if I wasn't a threat to him. So instead of shrinking like he wanted me to that moment empowered me and gave me the spark I needed to keep going. Our team kept a harsh spotlight on Dick Harpootlian, in these last three years, a spotlight like he had never seen before. The great big senator who manipulated the press for decades was not used to being criticized or questioned. We showed people time and time again that his actions couldn't just be excused as a defense attorney doing his job. We show how he lied, bullied and used his power and influence to use and abuse the justice system, all on behalf of his client, Alex Murdaugh, the murderer. Now all these years later, I think it's safe to say Dick knows that I do, in fact exist. And last night's election results are in fact a big deal. Dick Harpootlian's Senator seat is in the nucleus of good ole boy power. That power has shifted. Finally, and I believe this shift in one Senate seat could start a tidal wave of change in South Carolina for the better. The days of Dick's always been like that, and we just deal with it. Our over. Dick has gotten away with a lot in these past few years. sexist and racist remarks, pointing that gun at the prosecution during trial, filing a frivolous complaint to get Eric Bland's law license removed, etc, etc. And last night's results show that even the untouchable dicks of the world can be hit by karma and accountability when they least expect it. We have a long way to go in South Carolina. And last night wasn't great across the board. One of our best lawmakers, Senator Shealy has to face a runoff. Brad Hutto unfortunately won his primary in Luke Rankin Michael senator, who we will talk about in a minute, won his primary too but will

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face a challenge or later. Oh, and a congressional candidate who trolled me and called me a child on Twitter once she lost her primary bid. So that is something too. Last night wasn't perfect, but it did make a mark in what I see as a shift toward sunlight in South Carolina. That is a big deal.

Liz Farrell 06:05

A lot has happened over the past week in the Mica Francis case, again, we've decided to honor Mica's wishes and grant her a posthumous name change, we will no longer be referring to her as Mica Miller, which let's talk about that. As you all know, we were in the middle of putting together the episode last week when Mandy was in Myrtle Beach for the hearing that had been scheduled in Mica's divorce. The hearing got canceled and a press conference was held. Instead, Mandy told you all a little bit about Mica's family's new mission to get a coercive control bill passed in South Carolina. We'll talk more about Mica's Law in a second. When we first heard the hearing was canceled. We were mildly concerned because of patterns we had been seeing in JP Miller's divorce cases where proceedings would get delayed or dropped, and where he would come to an agreement avoiding perhaps a courtroom battle, only for him to go back on that agreement. Later, we were a little worried that this was maybe a strategy on JP's part, a way to avoid having Mica's attorney and family put details about his marriage to him on the court record for the public to see. There were so many media agencies, us included, who had filed requests with the court to be present and record the hearing. If it was a strategy on JP's part then Mica's attorney Regina B Ward was all ready for him. Because like we told you last week, she included specific examples of the kind of abuse Mica's law would criminalize. All of the examples came from Mica's own journals as well as police reports. We don't know if JP was expecting that information to be published. But sure enough, the day after the

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hearing was canceled, because the parties had come to an agreement on some issues and decided to hold other issues in abeyance. JP and Solid Rock ministries had filed their responses to the complaint filed by like a sister and shocker JP is fighting Mica's and her family's request for her to revert to her maiden name. As part of the name change requests. The family is also asking that the court order that Mica's death certificate and other relevant documents reflect that name change. So, spiritually, she would no longer be tagged with the name of a man she was trying to escape. In his response, JP asked the court for the same restraining order the family sought from him. Plus, he asked for a Nico, a non adversarial contact order. Now this is something he included in his own divorce filing in February and in a postnuptial agreement that Mica's attorney says Mica had been forced to sign a Nico would restrict the Frances family from engaging in any adverse behavior against JP. It doesn't define what JP would consider to be adverse behavior, and it would bar them from making any disparaging remarks about him. He's asking for a temporary and permanent order. He's also asking that the Francis family pay his legal fees, something they're also asking of him, and he's asking that the court deny the Frances family's request for him to pay for a financial forensic expert. And of course, he's asking the court to deny the families and Mica's request to change her name back to Mica Francis or for her to go by her first and middle names Mica Acacia. In his filing, JP denies that the church is a quote mere extension of himself. He denies that Mica contributed to the acquisition of their home. He denies that the October 20/23 Divorce filing was dismissed in February at his behest. He denies that he sold their home to the church in December in an attempt to defraud Mica. He denies that the church is colluding with him. And he denies that the House is subject to equitable division. In its filing JP's church also denied colluding with him. And the church also is asking the court to issue a restraining order barring Mica's family from coming to the church campus quote,

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bothering, harassing, contacting or otherwise persecuting church members or officials. The church is also asking for attorney fees for Mica's family. At the end of last week, the judge issued a temporary written consent order that acknowledges the agreement the parties came to last week. The order returns Mica's car to the woman who cosign the loan for her and gifts JP temporary use and possession of Mica's car, the Honda Accord, the one that he had taken from her in February when he had her involuntarily hospitalized at a mental health facility and that's according to a police report. The order acknowledges that all other property that Robeson County Sheriff's Office took into their possession will be given to Mike as attorney. And the order restrains JP and Mica's sister and the church, I suppose, from contacting each other physically showing up at their houses and workplaces, threatening physical harm to each other, and sharing any private, provocative or intimate photos, videos or audio.

Mandy Matney 11:17

Okay so let's get back to Mica's Law because as we continue to learn more about Mica's case, we're also getting a refresher course and just how bad South Carolina is for women. According to a study that was released last year, South Carolina has been among the 10 most dangerous states for women, and 23 out of the past 25 years, we're talking about domestic violence and getting murdered by your partner. Think about that. That means 25 years ago, South Carolina was told you have a big problem here. And legislators were like Sorry, what did you say something about a lesser cut of meat. That is a reference to something one of our sitting scumbag senators actually said his name is Tom Corbin. And he said that about women in 2015. He called them a lesser cut of meat. Which is interesting. Because the more we look at South Carolina's history, it sure does seem like a state where men really don't like women, and seem to suspiciously prefer being around with

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just each other. Look at our Supreme Court in our state house. Look at all the rooms that men put themselves in that are filled with, you know, other men. In fact, after last night's election, South Carolina is left with the very possibility of only having one female senator in the State House by November, that would mean 2% of our Senate would be female. And they will still tell us that everything is equal, and that the men are fighting for the 51% of the population that has been historically screwed over by male lawmakers. Honestly, it is highly suspicious at this point. That said, Mica's Law is going to be a fight because like we keep saying this is a law that would empower women and give them more control over their own fates. In next week's Cup of Justice, you will hear from the global expert on coercive control laws. Laura Richards, who helped pass the world's first federal coercive control law in the UK and 2015. And Laura is now working to pass similar laws like Mica's Law around the United States. Mica's Law would criminalize a pattern of behavior that is far too common in toxic relationships, the kinds of toxic relationships that are normalized and patriarchal circles, like JP Miller's church, we know this is going to be a big battle because a coercive control bill has already been introduced in the legislature three times, twice in the house and once in the Senate. All three times it was essentially dead on arrival when it was sent to the Judiciary Committee. In December of last year, the South Carolina Bar Association held a continuing education course on family law court, in which attorney Megan Hunt spoke about coercive control and how to identify the signs of this type of domestic abuse. A packet from the class notes that coercive control perpetrators are a particularly dangerous type of abuser because they are persistent. Their desire to control is intense, their desire to control is intense and rigid. And if they feel like they're losing control, they can take extreme in and even lethal actions to maintain control and or punish the victim, they generally refuse to take no for an answer. Consequences are, quote, unlikely to be deterrence.

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They are generally very charming and manipulative, and they have no interest in changing their behavior. So our state's own Bar Association has recognized how malignant this type of abuser is. Our bar association is made up of lawyers, many of whom are also a part of our legislature. The bar even instructed lawyers and judges on what they can do when faced with situations where coercive control is at play. Some of the things on that list include recognizing that abuse can exist without bruises, making legal resources affordable for victims, validating victims experiences, advocating for victims, identifying and exposing abusive tactics by abusers, supporting victims attempts to set boundaries with their abusers, and by enforcing court orders. So where exactly is the disconnect? Well, the disconnect is that the bar has not acknowledged that this is an issue. They have acknowledged that lawyers and judges have a role to play in mitigating this type of abuse. They've acknowledged that abusers are very difficult to stop. And yet a bill that would be a literal Lifesaver has failed three times in our legislature. Is that because our mostly male legislature knows that a Venn diagram of their own bad behaviors toward women would sometimes overlap and the coercive control bubble. They can't even make a joke about women being a lesser cut of meat these days. Am I right boys? Right after Regina B Ward's press conference last week, where she specifically called out Senator Luke Rankin. Luke Rankin Mica's own senator, posted his lame defensive and manipulative response on his Facebook page. Rankin, by the way, is the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee. He is an attorney, who has been a part of the state senate since I was in preschool in 1993. He is up for reelection this year. And unfortunately, he also won his primary last night. Rankin has done nothing to fix the way our state elects judges. And he had this to say about the Francis family's requests for the legislature to reintroduce the bill under the name Mica's Law with a few



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amendments. First, it starts out by explaining the situation to people who are not familiar with it.

David Moses 17:57

I was shocked and saddened at the news of Mica Miller's death, and I join our community in mourning her much too short life. Now we await results of any investigation by the proper authorities of possible wrongdoing.

Mandy Matney 18:15

Then he scolds those calling for a law to protect women from coercive control.

David Moses 18:21

Disappointingly yesterday, the family law attorney who represented Mica before her tragic death, choose to use Mica's death to take a political cheap shot at me.

Mandy Matney 18:33

Then he splits hairs.

David Moses 18:36

For the record. There is no such bill pending before either the House or Senate Judiciary Committee, and no bill has been introduced by any member of the House or Senate since 2021.

Mandy Matney 18:52

Then he gets defensive while also manipulatively establishing that no one who matters seems to think we need this law.



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David Moses 19:01

Before yesterday, no law enforcement victim's advocate, Family Court Judge or family law attorney, including Ms. Ward has ever asked me to help make this bill a law.

Mandy Matney 19:15

He then calls Regina a liar.

David Moses 19:19

The statement or suggestion made otherwise is completely false.

Mandy Matney 19:26

Then he promises nothing while also and bear with me on this one because you might think that I'm reading too much into this. Getting a little dog whistle Lee for the patriarchy. He refers to South Carolina laws as meant to protect the innocent, and by innocent human likely means women, which is insulting and infantilizing. How about was meant to prevent bad actors from committing bad acts? How about laws that are meant to hold the guilty accountable? for their behavior, you only need to regard women as human. We don't have to be perfect Disney Princesses to be deserving of equal justice under the law that holds our abusers accountable.

David Moses 20:15

While I always seek ways to strengthen SEC laws to protect the innocent, I realized for a bill to become law, it requires action by the majority of the House, Senate and the Governor. I stand ready to help continue to make SC and our community the place so many love to call home.



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Mandy Matney 20:41

Like I said, He made no promises. Basically, the point of his post was that he didn't like people calling them out when he was trying to get reelected. Don't blame me, blame yourselves. And that, my friends, is the general attitude of our legislators. We really hope that hearing about the experiences Mica outlined in her journals will help motivate these guys in a different way this time around. Because honestly, we don't know how anyone can read these allegations, without wanting to fix it so that men won't be able to act the way that my gut says JP acted toward her without fear of arrest. We don't know how anyone can continue down their normal path after reading about Mica's allegation that JP would routinely take her phone and hide it from her allegations that he would tell her that her family members were not good people, and that she should disassociate from them. allegations that he would forbid her from spending time with friends or question her so insistently about it, that the harassment outweighed the benefit of having friendships, allegations that he wouldn't let her sleep and we keep her up all night, pulling the covers off her every time She dozed off allegations that he would throw her clothes out on the front line, that she would be forced to sleep in her car to get peace from him. allegations that he tracked her whereabouts and showed up at a location where she was in would stand in the distance so that she could see that he was there. allegations that he would monitor her communications and talk about them and his sermons. allegations that he would hack into her email, Apple account and Facebook account and assume her identity allegations that he would take her driver's license, wallet, purse, house keys and change the locks on the doors of the house. allegations that he convinced her she didn't need a lawyer allegations that he would use his sermons to send messages to her against speaking out allegations that he raped her and forced her to perform sexual acts against her will and forced her to watch him and

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sexual acts with others. allegations that he would preach that if his sexual wishes went unfulfilled. It would be her fault if he sought another woman or man to satisfy him. allegations that he removed her from their bank accounts, but required her to continue to pay bills. allegations that he would mess with her transportation and interfere with her work by randomly firing her from the church that she worked at. allegations that he would use her faith against her and tell her that she wasn't a good Christian allegations that he would make videos of her in private settings and then threatened to upload them as she didn't do what he wanted. allegations that he would tell her she was lazy, mentally ill, gullible and not smart. All of that, the larger picture of it, the pattern of it would have been prohibited if South Carolina would have passed its 2022 coercive control bill. And that is not even mentioning the allegations that speak toward further amendments to that bill suggested by Mica's attorney and family allegations that JP was emotionally abusive, allegations that JP was using humiliation as a weapon against Mica. Allegations that he would ignore her requests to leave her alone. allegations that he was cruel to her dog allegations that he would destroy her property. And he had keyed her car and defended her hood with the dumbbell allegations that he actively tried to and in some instances, was able to destroy evidence related to her documentation of his alleged abuse. allegations that he misused legal documents and had a cease and desist letter sent to Mica threatening legal action against her if she spoke badly about him and the church. allegations that he demanded she sign a postnuptial agreement, giving up certain marital rights allegations that he demanded that she signed a Separation Agreement without the benefit of legal counsel. allegations that he would miss us law enforcement by calling police on her to make false reports. allegations that he would misuse the legal process by filing papers twice and probate court to have her committed. The judge prevented that from happening, by the way.

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allegations that he convinced Mica to drop her divorce case against him only to very literally turn around and immediately file his own case against her allegations that he would routinely cheat on her and pay for sex with both men and women. allegations. He would steal her identity and text from her accounts in an attempt to disgrace her name. allegations that he would change her passwords and lock her out of her own accounts. allegations that he would engage in medical abuse by declaring Mica to be bipolar, and forcing her to take his prescription of lithium. allegations that he would give her testosterone shots and make her swallow pills in his presence. allegations that he would convince her that her Christian duty was to forgive him. allegations that JP would use his power at the church against her even using church letterhead for the purposes of harassing her. And finally, allegations that he would engage in physical abuse that left no marks, such as finger punching Mica in the throat or holding her up against a wall by her throat, and such as slapping a drink out of her hand and snatching a plate of food from her and throwing it. If you haven't read through Mica's list, we highly recommend that you do because it goes into even more detail. See the link in the description.

Liz Farrell 27:32

Okay, now, if you think that JP's fight against Mica's name change is a final act of control. Get ready for this one. This past week, JP began posting TikTok videos in which he's determined to reveal what he calls the truth. Again, he has never been charged with abusing Mica and he denies ever hurting her. But here he is in a video threatening to release 350 plus pieces of evidence that will show what Mica really thought about her family. And what Mica really thought about Charlotte, this guy seems to be so blind to his own behavior that he can't see that what he is doing here is a form of the harassment. He says he doesn't do. He's not only threatening to hurt Mica's family and her friends. He's



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threatening to hurt his memory by exposing the private thoughts she expressed to him. So what is he trying to accomplish here? It's not normal behavior or to make threats like this. But you know, what is normal? Little boys playing with toys. In JP's video, he's positioned himself next to a life sized doll of spider man. Yeah, while he's sitting there next to his doll. He's making this weird threat. And it's like, why not just release this stuff? Why make an announcement that you're going to do it? In our opinion, the answer to that question is because threats are meant to control people, and behavior, right? Threats are designed to instill fear in the people whose behavior you're trying to control. And to some people out there, that's the sport. That's the game. That's what they consider fun. In his second TikTok video, JP seems to take pleasure in the thought that he's just being super clever. He talks about the notion that Mica had JP a signature tattooed on her at JP's behest. And that it was a sign that he owned Mica like she wore his property. He says that soon after Mica got that tattoo? He and Mica broke up for a bit and she covered that tattoo up with a tattoo of a lotus flower. Then she got his name tattooed on her again. He tells his imagined audience that if having a person say nurture tattooed on you means that that person believes that they own you. Then tada. He lifts his shirt and shows Mica's signature on the part of his torso that's typically covered by his arm. Some commenters noted that the tattoo looked brand new, we have no idea whether that's true. In a third video, JP says he got that tattoo and January when Mica also got a big wedding band tattooed on her finger. He asked the question, is that something someone who was being abused would do? Yeah, it is. It's called appeasement. It's called being so broken down by accusations and a lack of trust that you feel like you have to do something highly demonstrative in order to show the person who is allegedly tormenting you that you're loyal to them. That said, we don't actually know that Mica had that tattoo. If she did, it wasn't fully visible from the

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surveillance videos shared by Robeson County Sheriff's Office. Also in his third video, JP talks about why he gave that weird sermon the Sunday after Mica's death. He admits that it was stupid to do and says he asked people to stay silent because he didn't want to hear any of their personal stories about suicide, which okay pastor, and that he wanted them to convene with Jesus. He also says he was in denial and that he didn't want any of it to be true. Another claim he makes is that before Mark had died, his goal every day, had been to keep her alive. That his mission every single day was to find quote, somebody somewhere to get Mica her lithium because he told people if she didn't have her lithium, then she was going to kill herself. Here's where we remind you that like us list includes a suggestion to include medical abuse and the new coercive control law because Mica felt that JP was forcing her to take his medication for a condition she did not believe she had. Also in the video, JP says he went to pastors, counselors, doctors, policemen, judges, friends, family, or roommates, everyone you could possibly think of, and nobody believed him that Mica was sick and needed her lithium. There's so much to unpack there. It almost feels like he's being smug about being right about Mica wanting to kill herself, which makes us wonder why his lawyers aren't stopping him from making these videos. Mica killed herself, he says because she wasn't taking her lithium again. So many people have reached out to us to tell us that lithium is rarely used these days to treat bipolar disorder, which we don't actually know that she had at this point. 350 plus pieces of evidence has yet to produce one single piece of evidence. The bottom line is that JP is not only wanting to clear his name, he wants to keep Mica's family and friends exactly where he wants them. He wants them to fear him so that they will stop airing his dirty laundry. And he seems to believe that what JP wants JP should get. Unfortunately, the system has been agreeing with him so far, for the most part. One example of that would be the pardon that Governor Henry McMaster granted him. So let's

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quickly talk about this because the more we learn about JPs 1998 charges, the more clear it becomes that the pardoned board should have thought twice about allowing this man to have his rights restored. We've told you about how these charges were from an incident in which JP intentionally hit a woman with his car, driving at a high rate of speed in 1998. We told you about how his body is rallied around him in 2021 to support his party and so that he could buy a gun and with the help of his lawyer, that was granted, but we never told you about how exactly his charges were pardoned and what went down that day. So we fold for all records in relation to JP's 2021 pardon because this is critical stuff. As we showed you in Murdaugh time and time again, it's really important to take a closer look at every single time the system gives men like JP a green light and tells them that they can get away with a little bit more if they just asked. So last week, we received the audio recordings of JP's pardon hearing with the South Carolina Department of probation, parole and pardon services. I just want you guys to hear for yourself how easy this was for him. First off his attorney Casey Brown from Winslow law gives a one minute summary of why JP deserves to be pardoned.

Casey Brown 34:47

I can begin. My client Born May 20, 1979. Seeking a pardon for assault and battery power and aggravated nature. The incident date is listed as February 11, 1998. And client pled guilty in June of 1999. He received a four year sentence suspended to three years probation. Probation was completed without incident. And it's been 20 years since then, my client has completely turned his life around. He's got a family, wife, kids, he started a ministry. And so we are seeking a pardon for this to restore his civil liberties. As a religion and Lord teaches forgiveness. We're seeking that from the state. So I'll turn it over to my client to explain a little bit more about his life and changes since the last 20 years.

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Liz Farrell 35:48

And then JP has asked why he feels like he deserves a pardon.

JP Miller 35:55

Oh, well, first of all, when it happened over 20 years ago, I was driving a work truck through a weight zone after a hurricane. And, and the person that brought the charge or whatever, said that the waves of the wake, I guess knock them over or something. And when I went to court, I was young, and I didn't have a lawyer and didn't know anything. And a lady that was in the courthouse just told me to pled guilty. And so I went in to plead guilty. And the person who was bringing the charges didn't even show up because they had three or four warrants after their arrest. I never even met the person or sold the person ever in my entire life. And I didn't even know that I had this charge until a few years ago. We have a bunch of lieutenants and policemen in our congregation. And I guess...

EXPOSING CRIME & CORRUPTION

Pardon Hearing Official 36:50

Mr. Miller, let me tell you something here. I'm sure your attorney will tell you. We don't retract cases here. We there's, we just can't do anything about that. We just have the facts of the case. What we try and look at now is how we changed. Why do you feel like you deserve a pardon some of the things you've been doing since all this happened?

Liz Farrell 37:11

JP obviously wasn't following directions. But let's talk about his bizarre version of how things went down in comparison to what the victim said happened and what he pleaded guilty to. There were no hurricanes in February 1998. There was however flooding in Myrtle Beach. According to the warrant for JPs arrest and to a civil lawsuit filed by his victim, Jennifer Garland, shortly after people were out and about that day in



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the Bridge Creek neighborhood, putting down sandbags to alleviate the flooding. According to the warrant, people told JP to slow down but he continued to speed through the neighborhood. He hit Jennifer and she lost her balance and then stood up and as he drove off, she ended up on the hood of his truck for a quarter mile before he slammed on the brakes, and she fell off. According to the lawsuit at around 3:45 on the afternoon of February 8, 1998, Jennifer was assisting her family and friends was sandbagging their homes. JP was allegedly at the scene driving a different truck from the one he ended up hitting Jennifer with while driving and not truck on the closed road. And after being told to leave by people at the scene, GP returned in a silver S10 pickup with black tape over the license plate to conceal his identity. Again, this is according to the filing. Quote, upon returning in the silver S10 Defendant again began to speed to harass the people attempting to save their homes. Jennifer was on the road and told JP to slow down according to the lawsuit. He reacted by accelerating and drove into her and then drove off with her on the hood. Again, according to the lawsuit, then he left the scene. According to the lawsuit. In its response to that lawsuit JP denied the allegations and upped the ante. In his filing. He alleges that he was harassed at the scene that Jennifer jumped on the hood of his truck and attempted to damage his truck, and that she refused to get off the truck. He said any injury Jennifer had from that is her own fault. But then the next year, he pleaded guilty as charged in criminal court. It's ridiculous that JP would claim that he didn't even know he had these charges when there are repeated instances of him using his redemption from his past in his sermons. And it's ridiculous that you have tried to paint his victim as a criminal. I mean, he's a pastor, someone who is supposed to care about people forgive people and ask for forgiveness for himself. Not only does he try to manipulate the board into believing that these charges were so unfair, and meaningless that he had simply forgotten about them. And

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not only does he try to paint the victim out As a bad person with warrants out for her arrest, and not only does he show zero remorse for this past, he wants the board to know that he's connected in the law enforcement community that he is such an important person and has them on his side. You caught where he mentioned that he had police lieutenants in his congregation, right? It's odd. No. So finally, JP follows directions and tells the board why he thinks he deserves this pardon.

JP Miller 40:32

I have a wife and five children. My older three are college graduates.

Liz Farrell 40:37

Notice how he tries to paint himself out to be the head of this like solid and established family when really he has a child from a teenage relationship with a different last name from him. For kids from a marriage that he ruined, allegedly with his sex addiction and a life he was allegedly cheating on at the time. Could we talk about how many bad men get bonus points just for stating that there are a husband and a father as if that carry something? Can we talk about how many men who are also husbands and fathers have brutally murdered their own family members. So being a husband and a father actually means nothing. Also, this isn't his kids fault. But he absolutely did not have three children who were college graduates at the time of this hearing. That is a lie.

JP Miller 41:26

I've started the church has over 500 people. And each week, we have started a homeless ministry that specifically takes vets that are homeless, off the streets, gets them jobs, with people in our congregation, and we give them a place to live. Give them transportation, once they've completed our courses, started a Christian



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private school that is the most affordable school in all of Myrtle Beach, so that any Christian family that wants to put their child in a private school can do so. Like I said, I didn't even know this charge was on my record until recently. And and, you know, I just I would love to have the part. And just because I think it's the right thing for me, is the right thing to do in general.

Liz Farrell 42:11

Here's the rest.

Pardon Hearing Official 42:14

How's it gonna help you? What are you looking to do?

JP Miller 42:20

I guess I'm just looking for a little bit of forgiveness. And I think that it would, you know, with the lieutenant's and the placement in our congregation, just, you know, it just adds to my I guess the things that I've accomplished in the past 20 something years, just feels weird to have a charge on your record like that. Especially one of how it took place. It's just, and

Casey Brown 42:47

I think that because it's been 20 years since the completion of his probation. We're looking to restore civil liberties, and especially for a leader of a church person who's started educational programs, and homeless vet programs. They got restoring civil liberties, civil liberties, or a man like this is important as an American and as a South Congress.

Pardon Hearing Official 43:14

Absolutely. Thank you. I appreciate the clarity there. And I'm not going to ask you about giving back your community because your whole life



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looks like you're headed back giving back to your community through your ministry. Sir. Is there anything Mr. Miller, that you haven't been able to tell us that you I just want to make sure this board knows today?

JP Miller 43:36

Yes, sir. I guess that sums it up, sums it up. Thank you for your time.

Pardon Hearing Official 43:40

We appreciate you appearing today. Anything in closing with Brian.

Casey Brown 43:46

Just that it's been 20 years again and my clients, the change in his life is it was brought on not by the state is by his own himself doing. And I think it's night and day from the 90s to now of what he's done, what he's accomplished, not for himself and his family, but also for the community as a whole in the state of South Korea. And I think that that warrants reading the restoration of civil liberties, he knows that the charge won't be removed from his record, but it's the forgiveness based on the life that he's lived the exemplary life he's led and the goals and and rewards that he saw for not only himself, his family, and the rest of South Carolina.

Liz Farrell 44:33

If JP had not gotten this pardon, would it have changed his behavior over the last few years? Obviously, we can't know the answer to that. But we can say that this part in that he definitely did not deserve in our opinion, likely sent a very affirmative message to him that he was this person he wanted people to believe he was a person whose present was so honorable that he didn't deserve to have to continue paying these consequences, consequences by the way that he accepted in lieu of going to trial and going to prison anymore.



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Mandy Matney 45:13

Again, it confirms a core belief JP seems to have about himself, which is that if he wants something, he is entitled to get it. And people always seem to support him in his endeavors, no matter what. It is something that has come across loud and clear, as we have continued to go through his divorce filings. And it's something that a lot of these guys accused of doing horrible things to their wives like Alex Murdaugh, Michael Colucci, and now JP Miller all seem to share a history of getting out of whatever they get into in a system, just letting them do it time and time again. Now let's talk about JP's divorce from his first wife. Last week, we shared the most recent filing in this case with you and emergency motion in which JP's first wife Allison, sought full custody of their two youngest children. With her motion, Allison included an affidavit that further illustrates microspheres leading up to her death. She said that things started to get really bad with JP and his marriage to Mica in fall of 2021. In fact, she links the worsening of JP's behavior and the sudden death of Chris Skinner a motivational speaker who is married to a woman that Allison identified as a Paramore of JP's Chris Skinner was paralyzed from the chest down. Despite this, he was a surfer and ostensibly adept around water. In September 2021, he was found unresponsive in his neighborhood pool, he drowned to death. Alison said that it was around this time. And around the time that JP was trying to get a pardon so that he could get a gun that she began to witness increasingly concerning behavior from JP which eventually led to Mica seeking her counsel about what to do. Here is a voicemail from Mica that Allison included as evidence with her motion.

Mica Miller 47:43

Mica. This is my new number. Please don't give it to anybody but I just wanted to see you your counselor was to help you to forget this stuff and keep your heart right through all the masks I don't want to lose



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myself in this. I don't want to pursue anything out of anger and vengeance or anything like that. Whether it be free peace, keep a soul right. So if you just text me in the evenings as a good counselor, you know, I greatly appreciate it.

Mandy Matney 48:24

In her affidavit, Allison said that the things Mica had told her about JP lined up with her own experience enough that she knew Mica was telling the truth. So what was Alison's experience with JP right now, we can only go by the story that the divorce filings show. Allison and JP separated in June 2015 when JP's affair with Mica became known. It is around this time that Mica separated from her husband. When Alison who was 35 at the time filed for divorce. She did not cite JP's affairs as grounds for the divorce. In an affidavit. She noted that she intentionally did, and we'll talk about that in a minute. Now again, in an interesting coincidence, Allison was using the very same law firm that Mica hired to represent her and her divorce from JP. Allison's attorney has since left and gone to another firm in August 2015. She and JP had come up with an agreement for their four children in which JP would have had joint legal and physical custody of them. But JP scheduled with the children with articulated and like we mentioned last week, JP was not allowed to have custody of his daughter overnight. Something Alison maintains was done because of JP's admission that he had molested teenage girls at the church at the time JP. He agreed to pay \$1,200 a month in child support and \$1,100 and alimony. He agreed to pay this alimony for up to 12 years. The agreement allowed him to stop paying if Alison who did not work at the time, were to remarry or to live with a love interest for more than 90 days. JP also agreed to give her ownership of the house with the understanding that she would sell it after the kids were gone and split the equity with him. Nearly all of Alison's alimony would go toward paying the mortgage. She was allowed to keep her Honda

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Odyssey and was expected to cover the costs. Just a few months after coming to this agreement, the couple had to amend it because JP was now claiming that his income had dropped significantly, a trick that he apparently learned from his father. And don't worry, we will open up that can of worms on a later episode. According to the affidavit that Alison would later file This was due to self-inflicted injuries, which resulted in him being temporarily confined to a wheelchair. According to a financial declaration JP filed in October 2015. He had no permanent address at that time, and was now making only \$3,800 a month at the church. He attended the October 2015 hearing without an attorney Allison agreed to lower his child support payments to \$900 a month. A transcript from this hearing was included in their divorce file. We want to share it with you because we think it is pretty telling and paints a picture of the chaos in this man's life. The judge began by asking Alison and JP boilerplate questions about their agreement. But partway through something happened and it's not clear what here's David reading the transcript.

David Moses 51:56

Okay, Mr. Miller, do you need a minute sir? JP, I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm good.

Mandy Matney 52:04

The judge continued to ask questions affirming that they had both agreed to the terms of the agreement. But when the judge asked if they both believe their agreement to be in the best interest of the children, JP appears to have delayed his answer, when the judge pressed him, he apologized and answered affirmatively. So it seems like something was going on with JP, some sort of behavior that caused the judge to stop proceedings twice. At the end of the questioning, the



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judge asked JP where he was working. Here is David reading the transcript.

David Moses 52:42

JP: I'm the pastor of a church in Myrtle Beach, Solid Rock ministries. The court: Okay, I see you're in a wheelchair. You apparently have some bandages on your right foot. JP: I fell out of a tree about 10 days ago. Yeah. The court: Out of a tree? JP: Yes, sir. The court: Do you have any broken bones? JP: Yes, sir. Five and my foot and two and my wrist and my knees messed up. The court: What are your prospects for recovery? JP: I'm hoping about two months, I'll be able to walk by Christmas again. The court: Okay. What were you doing up at a tree? JP: Everybody asked me that. The court: If you don't mind my asking. JP: I have to be honest with you, I guess. Is that right? In hopes for reconciliation? The court: Okay. That's okay. I don't need to hear that.

Liz Farrell 53:46

Clear transcripts are great, but they don't always convey the vibe in the room. But I think we all get what was going through the judge's mind in that exact moment. He was like, nevermind, I can tell there's going to be some heart nonsense, and I'm not interested. So why was JP in a tree? Was he doing some like 1980s Romance thing and hopeful that there'd be some sort of reconciliation if he got up in a tree? Was he trying to fly like Superman? It is very unclear. Later in the hearing the judge confirm that JP was representing himself and asked if he had been given time to hire one. JD says yes, and tells the judge that he couldn't afford to hire an attorney but that he was Oh kay. The judge continues to press him and JP tells them I'm fine. I can represent myself. At that point Allison's attorney interjected to tell the judge that JP had consulted with several lawyers prior to this date, and had reviewed the agreement with more than two attorneys a year after



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being separated from JP Allison filed for divorce. Remember, in South Carolina, you have to live apart from your spouse for a year before you can get a no fault divorce. worse. Keep in mind during this separation period, sources say that JP was refusing to let Allison go even though the marriage ended due to his affair with Mica for a period of time he allegedly love bombed Alison with grand gestures trying to win her back just like he allegedly did with Mica in the year leading up to her death. On September 14 2016, a final order of divorce was filed, because JP and Alison had already hammered out their agreement over custody and how they were going to split their assets. When Allison filed for divorce, she did so unrepresented and used a boilerplate form to do so that boilerplate form included language that waived alimony, which is not something the court agreed to, and not something that she caught right away. But JPA caught it. And according to their divorce records, he decided on his own that that absolved him of having to pay Allison alimony, so he stopped paying her in November 2016. Alison asked the court to amend her final order of divorce to fix this error. So in January 2017, a hearing was held where both she and JP had attorneys. He was Val guest who is now a South Carolina state representative and also unfortunately won his primary last night. Now the waiver of alimony was seen as a mistake by the court which noted that JP's agreement on alimony hadn't changed, nor had he asked the court to change it and nor did he question Allison about this contradictory language in their divorce filing. The court also noted that though JP was at the courthouse the day Their divorce was granted, he had chosen not to enter the courtroom during the hearing and that he failed to file a financial declaration. Why didn't he enter the courtroom? Who knows? But the court decided that he was still obligated to pay the alimony that they had agreed to a year and a half before. According to court records. He did not do that. So, two months after the Court issued its final order on the matter, Allison had to file a petition for the court to

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hold JP in contempt. According to the filing, he had stopped paying her full alimony back in October 2016. In June 2017, another hearing was finally held. Now of course JP filed a counterclaim to Allison's claim and was officially seeking a temporary modification to his child support and alimony. Again, JP was represented by Val guest and according to the final order, he presented evidence and a witness. It's not clear who that witness was. For her part, Allison had sworn an affidavit in which she finally put JP's affair with Mica on the record. According to the affidavit, Alison started Solid Rock ministries with JP and worked in the women's ministry earning \$1,000 a month in addition to other allowances and benefits. In the affidavit, Allison says that the affair not only ruined her marriage and damaged her children's relationship with JP it caused her to lose her income and her church family. Quote, our marriage and my husband's career were less than stable at the time because at the time my husband's affair was discovered. He had previously admitted to both me and our congregation that he had an addiction to prostitution. He had also confessed to me and other staff members of the church that he had sexual encounters with young females from the church who were under the age of 16. When the defendant's affair was discovered, the church leaders demanded that the defendant seek counseling for sexual addiction. When he refused. The majority of our church left the congregation. Hang on. I want to pause here because this is a preacher we're talking about who still hasn't been canceled. Not only did he have a public affair with a young church member who was married to his best friend, he was allegedly having encounters with teenage girls. That affair was wholesome compared to these other accusations which included an addiction to prostitution while being married, by the way. And according to Allison, he admitted to sexual encounters with these girls in the church who are under 16 and that people in the church knew about it. As we said in a previous episode, JP preaches a lot about forgiveness when it comes to him. He talks a lot in sermons about how

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he is, quote, not perfect, and no one is as perhaps a manipulation tactic to convince his congregation that all sins are created equal and must be forgiven, but most especially his sins. We also talked about how Alison said she tried to tell police about JP's alleged inappropriate actions with teenage girls and quickly realized that JP's power would prevent him from accountability and Shakur, she said that she was told by police that no one would believe her. Imagine how much of the story would be different if there was just one officer who did believe her instead of showing her the door and that the system has and always will favor men like JP, so Allison had to back down from that fight and continue to fight for her own kids in court. In the affidavit, Allison said she had agreed to work with JP on reaching an agreement and not seek an adultery divorce, quote, as to attempt and prevent him from further damage to his career as a church pastor in JP's financial declaration at the time, he claimed to only be earning \$3,200 a month. In her affidavit, Allison pointed out that this claim was not supported by any financial documentation. She wrote, quote, since the defendant is responsible for setting his own salary, it would be easy for him to manipulate what he is allegedly being paid. So that gives us some insight into JP's financial control at the church right. Remember at the beginning of the episode when we told you that JP seemed to have a strategy in which he agreed to things only to change his mind later when it suited him. In this case, he had agreed to financial support, and then almost immediately claimed he couldn't afford it due to his tree injury. Now, two years after their separation and nine months after he had decided on his own that he wasn't obligated to pay Allison's alimony. When he was being forced to account for himself in front of a judge. He was saying that his salary had been reduced, and Alison was like a shore. In her affidavit. She also puts it on the record that the church was paying for JP cellphones, his gas, for food, eating out and entertainment, health necessities and medical funds. Also, it seems like

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by this time in June 2017, JP had built the church back up to where he had three services on the weekend, Alison wrote, quote, it is hard to understand how the defendant is suddenly making less now when every aspect of the ministry has improved. Alison also noted in her affidavit that JP had moved into a new house directly in front of the marital residence, and had also purchased a boat, motorcycle and a golf cart. She wrote, quote, I do not understand how he can have these things but not afford to be able to pay alimony. She noted that JP also had quote various roommates to help him with his expenses. Because JP had stopped paying Alison alimony. Allison said that she had to get a \$15,000 loan from her family to pay her mortgage and her attorneys fees. JP also filed his own affidavit in this matter, and it's really interesting to see how different it is from Allison's first JP does not mention any affair or what precipitated his separation and divorce. He simply says in 2015 When my wife decided she wanted to separate I gave her everything in hopes we could work things out and reconcile. He says that he had no money to hire a lawyer and no place to stay at that time. Then he hinted that he was pressured to sign the original agreement. Quote, when I signed the original agreement at Allison's lawyer's office, I did so because they told me if I ever couldn't pay that it was easy to go to court and ask for a reduction. And also because Alison gave me hope that we could reconcile. So he's blaming Alison, who frankly and I'm basing this on the timeline of their divorce filings as well as her affidavit does not appear to have been interested in a reconciliation. JP says that he had to borrow over \$20,000 from friends, parents and grandparents and that he had taken cash advances on his credit cards, which were now maxed out. He even borrowed from the church quote, just to be able to pay Alison the alimony she requested while also trying to live and take care of my children. Now for some more blame. JP said he only made \$18 An hour and that he couldn't survive like this. He made no mention of the boat, the motorcycle or the

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golf cart, by the way. Then he said that Allison has quote come to my job and in parentheses, he wrote church on a Sunday morning and screamed and cussed in front of over 20 parishioners as well as harassed me in person. Many times when I pick up and drop off the kids, her boyfriend has also threatened me several times and made me very uncomfortable when I'm picking up and dropping off my kids. Then he notes that he was no longer getting a housing allowance from the church. Again, according to Alison JP controlled his salary at this time Here's where it gets good guys. He said the stress was unbearable. And quote, I believe Alison is not reporting all of her income. She has at least three jobs and he said this without any attorney. Then he misspelled Starbucks and noted that she also worked as a babysitter and at another local church. He said he was begging the court to come up with an amount that allowed him to live without borrowing money, and that would allow him to be quote, the great dad that I know I am. I don't mind eating ramen noodles every night, and he misspelled ramen, and peanut butter and jelly sandwiches every day. He asked the court to reduce his alimony to Allison by 50% and set the child support accordingly. He said he had worked really hard with his attorney to settle this matter outside of court, and so he would like the court to make Allison pay for that attorney. In the end, the judge sided with Allison. In her final order, the judge wrote, quote, I find the actions of the defendant to be in willful and deliberate violation of the prior order of the court. Now, up until Alison had filed her petition for contempt, JP had only paid her 250 Of the nearly \$8,000 He owed her but after she had filed that petition, he coughed up around \$3,300. So the judge ordered JP to pay the balance of what he owed Alison within 90 days. So JP had also asked the court to find Alison in contempt and violation of their court order because in November 2016, right around when he stopped paying her alimony, she apparently gave him back the car that she had gotten in the divorce 2010 Honda Odyssey, JP was seeking

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financial credit for taking over the burden of that car and paying for all the related expenses after Allison had given it back to him. He even noted in his motion, the amount he had paid for new brakes and tires and an oil change. The total amount he said he had spent on the car totaled to almost the entire balance of what he owed Alison in alimony. And he was seeking to get credit for that. But the judge found that JP had consented to taking back the car, and that Alison had erred in relying on his word, but that she had not violated their agreement. The judge also ruled that JP was not due any money for that. More than that she ordered JP to pay Allison's legal fees. As for his request to have his alimony and child support reduced, the judge denied it and ordered him to continue paying the amounts that they had agreed upon in October 2015.

Mandy Matney 1:07:56

Again, this gives us a decent look into the way JP seems to move. It shows the blame that he attempted to put on Allison. It also seems to show that he regarded himself as blameless in all areas of his life. It is a shame that the judge didn't let him put his fall from the tree on the court record, because something tells us that would have been very insightful. Now last week, a hearing had also been scheduled for Allison's emergency motion to suspend her custody agreement with JP for their two younger children, who are both teenagers now, as a part of her filing, she included a video of JP's youngest son refusing to go with JP during a custody handoff. From the video, it appears that a cop is present. We are not yet sure what that's all about. But in the video, JP appears angry. He picks up the crying boy who begins hitting JP in screaming to be let go and JP carts off to his car. It's tough to watch. Custody transfers can obviously be very contentious. So ordinarily, this wouldn't mean anything on its own. But Alison was submitting it as evidence in a hearing to keep her children away from JP for now,

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especially while he's dealing with the national spotlight on him. We do not know how the judge ruled on Alison's motion though, because the records now appear to be sealed. But back to our earlier statement about JP's seeming belief that he is a blameless being. Since Mica Frances' story became known. JP has denied every allegation made against him, and he's used the legal system to try to bully anyone who has the audacity to speak out after her appearance on True Sunlight. Mica's best friend Charlotte received a cease and desist letter from JP which he probably posted on social media and is planning to frame it on a wall. The letter claimed to be for In the law office of Russell be long, but it is hard to imagine, even in South Carolina, you know the land of no consequences for good old boy lawyers that any lawyer would be dumb enough to put their name on a letter like this one. Now, I want to have David read a part of this letter because it is shocking and absurd.

David Moses 1:10:22

Please allow this correspondence to confirm that our office represents Mr. John Paul Miller. Following our press release on May 9, 2024. In closed, it has come to our attention that you have been making false claims online, phone conversations, meetings, and or other circulation to spread rumors without facts regarding our client, John Paul Miller and the death of his wife, Mica Miller, making false statements is actionable within the laws of South Carolina. Any said evidence you may have in your possession should be released to our office as soon as possible for examination of authenticity. If you do not have any supporting information for the statements being made, those statements will be considered defamatory, fabricated hearsay or simply opinion. We ask that you cease and desist all oral and written remarks that are false, unsupported and unfounded by evidence. To allege by opinion, hearsay or fabrication, especially crimes, is actionable within the court, and we are prepared to take legal action. If you decide to

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dismiss this notice and continue without supported information. Please remove any and all allegations opinion or statements by hearsay immediately, and cease from placing new fabricated information whether online, by phone, or in person.

Mandy Matney 1:12:16

What kind of lawyer doesn't know how to spell desist and hearsay? The letter mentions opinion several times. Does wrestling not understand that opinions cannot be defamatory? Notice in a letter, Charlotte isn't accused of saying anything particularly defamatory. They just say that she must stop talking about JP immediately and hand over all evidence that she has to back up her claims, which is not at all how the legal system works. And it is shameful that attorneys like Russell get away with these empty threats. Charlotte knows what she has to back her claims up. Charlotte knows what her legal rights are. Charlotte knows that she doesn't have to do a dang thing for JP and his silly lawyer who writes like a middle school student pretending to be an attorney. And Charlotte knew that sunlight, aka publishing that letter on social media was her best course of action. As we have said, one of the many forms of abuse that Mica's family wants to criminalize with Mica's law is misusing legal documents and the legal process. Specifically, Mica accused JP of having an attorney write her a cease and desist letter demanding that she stopped talking bad about JP and the church or she would suffer legal ramifications. The cease and desist letters sent to Mica's best friend shows us that this is a tactic that JP uses. When the narrative is spiraling out of his control. I think he is telling on himself through this cease and desist letter. I think he is showing us that he is still the guy who thinks that he can lie, manipulate and intimidate his way out of anything. A guy who was never learned that actions have consequences. But you know, something we have learned in the last three years, Karma can catch up with even the most powerful men in

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this state. And sunlight is their biggest enemy. We have so much more to talk about when it comes to all of the documents that we have gone through and have yet to go through in this case, including all the eerie similarities we have found in JP's divorces in the divorce of his parents. 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 at lunasharkmedia.com. Interruptions provided by Luna and Joe Pesky.

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