

[Transcript] True Sunlight / MMP #93 - End of An Era And Brighter Days Ahead: The Best (And Worst) of MMP + What's Next

I don't know how we've made it this far, but it's been an honor having you along this 99-week journey for 93 episodes.

This is the last episode of the Murdoch Murders podcast, and that is a big deal.

My name is Mandy Matney.

I have been investigating the Murdoch family for more than four years now.

This is a very special episode of the Murdoch Murders podcast produced by my husband David Moses and written with journalist Liz Farrell.

First of all, we aren't going anywhere, so please don't freak out.

We are simply changing the name of the podcast while the mission stays the same.

Our podcast will only get better from here, with more cases to cover, more journalists to work with, and I love this part, more time to do these podcasts.

Covering breaking news on a weekly podcast is tricky and stressful, and it usually resulted in a lot of rushed work, sleepless nights, and last minute cranking.

I can't tell you how many times the plan for the entire episode changed less than 24 hours before publication.

It was too many.

We will be planning ahead with a more cohesive work schedule focused on premium members.

MMP Premium is going to change for the better too.

The platform is getting a facelift, becoming more user-friendly, more exciting, and more informative.

MMP Premium will transition to Luna Shark Media, and it will be the platform for all of our podcast, news articles, case files, and exclusive video content.

We want it to continue to be a space where you can connect with a supportive community, learn from others, and do some good.

The podcast will still be free on this same feed, and if you subscribe to this feed on Apple or Spotify or wherever you get your podcasts now, you will continue to get alerts for new episodes when we change the name.

That said, before we make the switch, we all wanted to take some time going down the twisted, complicated memory lane of the Murdoch Murders podcast.

MMP has been so much more than just work for our entire team over the past two years.

Before we worked up the courage to publish this first episode, this was a story of a story Liz and I particularly were caring for years.

And when the murders happened, the weight of this story became the lump in my throat that I knew I had to get out.

I was a different person when this podcast started in 2021.

And in these 93 episodes, you've heard me grow from a self-conscious and uneasy 31-year-old unsure of what she wanted to a confident journalist driven by a clear mission of speaking the truth.

You cheered us on as our team has grown and expanded.

You supported our work when it felt like the entire world was against us.

I want to start by saying thank you for believing in us.

There would not be 93 episodes of MMP without you and your unwavering and powerful support.

There were so many times when I wanted to quit, but y'all kept me going.

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So for this episode, before we start tackling other complicated cases, we want to take some time to reflect on the last two years.

To remember the good, bad, ugly, and straight up strange things we have revealed on MMP. To remember where we started and see how far we've come.

To remind everyone that if we can do this, you can do it too.

In the beginning, and that would be June 22nd, 2021, this pesky little podcast started with these words.

I don't know who killed Paul Murdock.

I don't know who killed Maggie Murdock.

I can't say who killed Stephen Smith.

I don't know who, if anyone, killed Gloria Satterfield.

But I think I know who killed Mallory Beach.

And I know that her family will never get justice in her case.

And that keeps me up at night.

Oh man.

I have so many mixed emotions listening to this, but ultimately, pride overshadows all of them, and I will tell you why.

The first episode, which was only 10 minutes long, took dozens of hours to produce.

Some sentences literally took me an hour to get through.

I have always hated the sound of my own voice, and I assumed everyone did too.

All of the true crime podcasts I had listened to before had entire production teams and took months to make a few episodes.

I knew we weren't going to sound like that, and I thought it was silly to even try to sound like we could compete.

Essentially, we didn't know what we were doing.

We just knew that so few people understood the real story of the Murdock family, and we knew if we didn't do something big, a different narrative would take over.

So I know it sounds rough listening to these beginning episodes.

And I've thought about this many times about re-recording those first few episodes.

But I want people to hear the progress that we've made.

I want people to know that it's okay to publish something that has all the pieces but doesn't look or sound completely perfect.

It's okay to sound like you have a lot to learn.

And I'm proud of this, because ultimately, the reporting was accurate, which is what I thought people would focus on.

There were a few things I said in that episode that I listen to now and think, dang, if I only knew what was ahead.

Like this.

I have been investigating the Murdock family for the better part of two and a half years now, and it is by far the craziest, most twisted saga I have ever written.

In the last two weeks, I've seen national media swarm in on this saga, and many of them are just not getting it.

This is just not a case where you can parachute in and get right.

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Like I said, it's twisted, and every turn takes you down a very dark rabbit hole.

You don't know who to trust, you don't know who you can talk to, and the rumors are just as crazy as the truth.

Oh my gosh.

I truly thought it was crazy then.

And it was.

When there was only one ongoing lawsuit against the Murdochs, no criminal charges besides Paul and the boat crash, but so many rumors to sort through and pull strings at, particularly in four cases.

The boat crash that killed Mallory Beach, Steven Smith's murder, Gloria Satterfield's death and death settlement, and the double homicide.

In that first episode, we told you a little bit about what happened to Mallory Beach.

Evidence suggests that 19-year-old Paul Murdock was drunkenly driving a boat that crashed Jits outside of Paras Island, South Carolina around 2 am.

Paul, what bridge is this?

Paul, what bridge is this?

Paul, what bridge?

Paul, what bridge?

911, where's your emergency?

Police fire at you there.

Hello?

We're in a boat crash on Arthur Street.

There's six of us and one is missing.

19-year-old Mallory Beach was ejected into the dark water during the crash. Her body was found a week later. Mallory was a bright, bubbly teenager who lit up every room she walked into. She was the embodiment of a sweet southern girl. Mallory had long, blonde hair and a stunning smile. Most of all, she was the type of person who was genuinely kind to everyone she met. She suffered a horrific death on February 24th, 2019, and so many lives were forever changed by her death. We told you about what happened to Steven Smith where the investigation went wrong and how the Murdochs were never named as suspects, but their names came up more than 40 times in the investigation files. We have to go back to 2015 to the shocking, horrific death of Steven Smith. I will be clear here, the Murdochs were never named as suspects in Steven's death. But like the 2019 bow crash, the 2015 investigation into Steven's death was chaotic from the beginning, clouded by jurisdictional confusion and suspicions of investigative interference. Smith was found dead in the middle of Sandy Run Road in Hampton County around 4 a.m. on July 8th, 2015, he was 19 years old at the time of his death. Crime scene photos are horrific. Steven's face was covered in blood. There was a 7-inch gaping hole on the right side of his forehead. His head was misshapen by blunt force. Officially, Steven's death was classified as a hit-and-run, and that decision skewed the entire investigation off force. The theory was that Steven got hit by a truck mirror, which is hard for anyone to believe, especially those who know Steven. Also, there was no evidence at the scene that would lead anybody to believe that a vehicle did this to Steven. Police found virtually no evidence at the scene. No tire marks, no

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debris from a vehicle, nothing. In the aftermath of his death, investigators with the South Carolina Highway Patrol received multiple tips linking Steven's case to the Murdoch family. We told you about what happened to Gloria Satterfield, what little we knew about her death and death settlement. Just a few months before the fatal boat crash that killed 19-year-old Mallory Beach, Paul's father, Ellick Murdoch, settled a separate wrongful death claim. In that case, 57-year-old Gloria Satterfield died after a trip in fall in Hampton County on February 26, 2018 according to court documents. Documents do not say where Gloria fell or how she knew the Murdochs, but several sources close to the case have said that she's the Murdoch family housekeeper. Gloria left behind two sons. She, like Tennis, loved kids and her favorite color was purple, her obituary said. Most of all, she will be remembered for her laughter and her outgoing personality. And we told you about the double homicide investigation, the tiny pieces of information we knew at the time. But from what we knew, all of these cases seemed inextricably linked somehow, which is how we stumbled on our first catchphrase that came very naturally. That is a big deal. We ended the episode on this promise. We're not sure where this podcast is going, which is produced by my fiance who has been sitting with me at our kitchen table all through the weekend, nights and weekends, and we don't know where the investigation is going. But every week, we're going to publish an episode on this saga, not only about the double homicide investigation, but about Stephen's case and about Mallory's case and about Gloria's case. And here we are, 99 weeks later, with some answers, some accountability, a couple convictions, but still a very long way to go. Now, a few things happened after we launched that first episode in June 2021. One, we had more listeners than I imagined. Well, people besides our friends and family were actually listening, which was exciting. And two, a lot of those listeners were not very nice people. And turns out they hated the sound of my voice. A couple hours after publishing our first episode, I got the first of many, you should fix your vocal fry emails. This bothered me because I was so focused on my reporting at that time and getting interrupted every few hours by someone who, quote, isn't trying to be mean, but suggests getting a better sounding host. It was getting distracting and exhausting. I kept asking myself, would they say these things to a man? And the answer was no, they wouldn't. And honestly, I didn't know what the term vocal fry meant. So I looked it up and realized that it is essentially another tool that people use to police women's voices and bully them into silence. Against the advice of literally everyone who I talked to, I did something about that. And I addressed the vocal fry emails on the next show. I did this because people should know that their behavior is hurtful. And if we don't correct bad behavior here, then what are we doing exactly? Also, this week, I learned what vocal fry was for the first time. I hear it. Thank you, commenters. I am a journalist, not a podcaster. For the last three weeks, I have been on the phone all day, every day, chasing down leads in this case. Unlike the YouTubers and the other podcasters out there, literally all of the other podcasters working on this case, I'm actually doing real reporting here. It's exhausting. My voice will not be perfect, but the information will be accurate. Yes, I sound bitter and tired and angry there. And that was the first time I was truly completely my authentic self on this podcast. I didn't think it was a big deal at the time, but it ended up being a crucial moment that made our podcast so different from the rest of true crime. It was a moment that a lot of fans have told me hooked them to the podcast and it caught the ears of a lot of big names. A lot of women told me that they loved hearing a woman standing up for herself and how it was so important to hear a

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woman calling out bad behavior. And there are also plenty of people who told me that they stopped listening after that. So really, that little moment and the very polarized feedback we got from it helped shape the tone of MMP going forward. I wasn't going to just be a reporter, but also a human whom my listeners could relate to and trust. When we first started the podcast, I was sitting on two years of reporting about the Murdoch family, the Stephen Smith case, the boat crash and the Satterfield settlement. David and I had a simple goal to complete 10 episodes diving into the Stephen Smith case in the boat crash while we waited to get information in the double homicide case. Just about the only substantial piece of information that was publicly released that summer was the 911 call Ellic made. And even in that redacted phone call, Ellic Murdoch managed to tell the world who he really was and what he cared about. Can I just say the audacity of that man to be offended when asked if he lives in a mobile home after murdering his wife and son? And something else a listener pointed out to us in the early days of the podcast. In this clip, it sounds like Ellic says Paul, why did you have to get involved under his breath as the 911 operator questioned him. The 911 call was a big moment in the investigation. The tone of Ellic's voice, the inauthentic crying, the muttering about Paul, it all told me that we were on the right track looking into Ellic. Liz and I had a gut instinct from the moment that we found out about the double homicide that Ellic had something to do with it and that it had to do with the boat crash somehow. But tying that all together and trying to figure it out felt like putting a puzzle together in a hurricane. Impossible, exhausting, and I felt ridiculous, especially with the amount of pushback I was getting from people online calling me a conspiracy theorist and other names. But with the encouragement of David, Liz, and so many others, particularly hearing from the people of Hampton County, reach out and say thank you for saying what finally needs to be said, I kept going, or at least I tried. After running into so many brick walls, trying to pull strings in the double homicide investigation, I spent a lot of time filing foyers and talking to sources to better understand what happened the night Mallory Beach died. I figured, understanding the boat crash, this monumental event in the Murdoch family dynasty, we could start figuring everything else out. Here, Domino rejected this assumption that good old boy politics would play a role in this investigation. He said, well, it don't matter who you know to Anthony. Here, Domino asked Anthony one more time who was driving the boat. The driver is the one with no clothes on, correct? To be honest with you, the one you were getting mad at back there, he was in his drawer, he was the last one driving whenever I got down in the floor, the boat had no boxes. Let me know if you need another cigarette, all right, Bo? This is my dude, you want to get busted in the mouth, all right. He's got still got clothes on, correct? Yeah. All right, that's what, yeah, they're good. Everybody's good, physical wise. First, okay, but I just wanted, we need to know exactly who's driving and that's, you said that was the last one you saw, so that's why I told them because his ass will be responsible, okay? You hear me? Don't worry about that, we're going to handle on that end, okay? All right. Anthony said it. Y'all know Elick Murdoch? That's his son driving the boat. Good luck. Anthony knew that the mess was ahead of them. He knew there would be nothing normal about the boat crash investigation. He knew local cops didn't stand a chance up against

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the Murdoch dynasty. He knew that the Murdoch's justice system was different from everyone else's and Anthony was right in what he said that night was so important to understanding this story. After publishing that seventh episode about the boat crash, I remember looking at David and saying that I don't want to do this anymore. I was proud of the work, but it was August at that point. Days, nights, and weekends were merging together and I was starting to resent the work we were doing,

even though I knew how important it was. I was planning on taking a break for a few weeks or maybe forever. Then something happened that changed the entire course of this story.

We'll be right back.

I don't know who shot Elick Murdoch, but I will tell you everything I know in this special breaking edition of the Murdoch Murders podcast. In that episode, written two days after the shooting,

we pushed back against the narrative Team Murdoch was pushing out. I'm really proud of this clip I'm going to play because I remember going back and forth about questioning the Murdochs at a time

like this, when the public seemed overwhelmingly sympathizing with Elick. I felt crazy because my gut was telling me something was clearly wrong here, but 99% of the media seemed so convinced

that Elick was an innocent bystander struck by two recent tragedies, which is exactly what he wanted.

However, a powerful attorney named Jim Griffin, who works for the Murdoch family, told the Hilton Head Island packet that Elick Murdoch stopped on the side of the road after experiencing car trouble while traveling to Charleston from his home in Eilinton, which is also known as Moselle. But here's what's weird. The location of the shooting is out of the way from the direct route to Charleston from Eilinton. While the Murdoch's attorney made it look like this was a drive-by shooting, it's telling to me that Sled did not include that narrative in its release. Nor did they include any information about the alleged suspect vehicle. Also, they never called Elick Murdoch a victim in their news release. And that same attorney told several news outlets that Elick was taken to a hospital in Charleston and that appears to be incorrect information. How could he get that wrong? That's very basic information about his client that shouldn't have been released to reporters if he wasn't positive about it. And if he was wrong about that, what else was he wrong about? A spokesperson for the family issued a statement Saturday night and said that Elick Murdoch was expected to recover from his gunshot wound. Quote, we expect Elick to recover and ask for your privacy while he recovers. End quote. So while we don't know much about the shooting, the timing is noteworthy, as recent headlines have not favored Elick Murdoch at all. Two weeks ago, news broke that solicitor Duffy Stone, who has a long list of conflicts of interest and connection to the Murdoch family, quietly recused himself in the double homicide. Stone's recusal made a lot of people believe that the investigation was pointing toward Elick. Before Stone recused himself, he basically said it was because there were no suspects named in the case. And then when he suddenly

recused himself and didn't tell any media about it for weeks, Stone cited developments and sleds investigation that made him step away. After that episode published, everything changed.

The podcast soared from the bottom of the charts to number one on Apple and Amazon

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on September 16th, 2021. We went from thousands of listeners to hundreds of thousands of listeners in just a couple weeks. I couldn't believe it because things like this never happened to me.

At that point, my work accomplishments on paper were just a few small-scale journalism awards, like I said before. From the beginning, I knew that we didn't have the manpower or time to compete with the bigger podcast, and I didn't ever think that we could. Yet there we were, beating the very podcast that I had been so envious of. For the first time, I actually saw that there was a future for us in this podcasting thing. But maybe, just maybe, I was pretty good at it. I wasn't used to being good at things. But there really wasn't time to celebrate. Every day was a new fresh hill in the world of Ellick Murdoch. Surprise, he's a drug addict. Surprise, he stole millions from his law firm. Surprise, he actually hired a man named Eddie Smith to shoot him. But Eddie apparently

missed, and now we have to figure out if there is an actual shooting at all. In all of that chaos, what I really wanted to find out was what happened to Gloria Satterfield. She was the one victim that

at that point, we knew so little about. We hit several dead ends that summer trying to figure out what happened with Gloria's death settlement. And this is when Eric Bland flew in like Superman,

in a time when this story really, really needed a hero and a lot of energy. Now, we'll fast forward to last week, September 14th, 2021. Attorney Eric Bland first told me that he was representing Gloria Satterfield's two sons who say they never received any settlement money. So when I wrote the story last week, the only public document associated with this case stated that Ellick Murdoch's insurance provider agreed to a petition for \$505,000 for personal liability and Satterfield's

wrongful death. In this clip where I'm talking to Eric Bland, I'm typing because again, I'm a journalist before I'm a podcaster and I can't help but take notes. She was the housekeeper there for you know, almost 25 years, you know, very close to the family raised the kids. Any settlement that may have existed, the boys maintained that they have not received any distribution from any settlement proceeds. Our goal is to get answers for them and to make sure that people who have, you know, represented them and know to do their duties to them have done what they're supposed to do for these boys. That's our goal. It's crazy looking back at all of this, knowing that Ellick is now trying to get out of an insurance fraud lawsuit by once again, throwing the Satterfield family in front of a Mack truck with literally no concern for anyone but himself. It was around this time in September 21 that I started to hear that the Satterfield settlement wasn't just the 505,000 listed in the single court filing that I found in 2019, which I wrote about twice before the murders. Even knowing that it was going to be a bigger number, I wasn't prepared to hear that Ellick somehow managed to get his insurance companies to pay out more than \$4 million and that the Satterfields didn't see a dime of that settlement. I remember Eric's utter shock at what we were finding that not only Ellick stole this money, he had done so in spite of their being mechanism after mechanism to catch him, to stop someone like him from doing this. What I was hearing at the time was so hard to believe and yet so easy to believe. Ellick Murdock had helpers. We knew this about him. We knew that he had people willing to look the other way. We knew he was super close to judges in the 14th Circuit. We just didn't know how far those judges were willing to go for him. And take Judge Carmen Mullen for instance, who is still on the bench.

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After it became clear that Judge Mullen had allowed Ellick to take his name off the Satterfield case and after she had approved the settlement, despite the multiple red flags right in front of her face, Eric did something that we hadn't seen done before in this state. He threatened to depose Judge Mullen and then he was quickly slapped for it by Judge Mullen's mentor, Judge Casey Manning, the same judge who recently approved the secret shady deal that allowed convicted murderer Jarod Price to be released from prison 15 years early. What a mess, right? We have been screaming about this since 2021.

So around the same time that Judge Carmen Mullen signed the secret settlement, she also recused herself from the boat crash due to her long standing relationship with the Murdoch family. So are you hearing this right? The two judges who recused themselves from one Murdoch case, which was the boat crash, appeared to be involved in this one during the same time period. Perhaps that's because Gloria's case did not get media attention at the time. She then signs an order. That's the third document I sent you. When you look at that order, the first thing you should say to yourself is it's a different caption. The second thing you say to yourself is what's the court term? How would this be filed when there's no number? The third thing you say to yourself is it wasn't filed. The fourth thing you say to yourself is I'm going to look at that last page, the settlement disbursement sheet. And you see it's signed by Chad Westendorf.

And Judge, that was given to Judge Mullen for her to approve that order. And that disbursement sheet shows there's \$4,305,000 of money coming in. It shows the attorney's fees going out of \$1.45 million. The next thing that should catch your eye is there's \$105,000 even, not \$105,13, but \$105,000 even of, quote, prosecution expenses. What the hell is that?

Eric caught up with the chaos of the Murdoch story very quickly. He knew this was much bigger than

one case. And it was so relieving to have another voice, particularly a male attorney voice calling out the corruption. I think we're only halfway through the onion, because I think that this citadel of this Murdoch, the Murdoch citadel, is going to fall. And I think at the end of this, I think the Murdoch firm will not be what it was. There will be the word Murdoch in there. I think that the solicitor's office is going to be completely different whether Duffy Stungle, you know, stay solicitor, who knows. I don't see, you know, I'd be shocked if Corey Fleming keeps his law license, but who knows? You know, obviously, out to him. Or should? Yeah. I think there's certainly how the, I think the Chief Justice of our Supreme Court is going to look at how the court system is run down there and clerks of court and probate court and how it's all right. I think there's going to be a whole host of disinfectant on that whole town because of all this. And you guys keep doing the sunlight you're doing it. You know, nothing can get swept under the rug.

As Elix financial crimes were finally being brought to light,

Team Murdoch's narrative about the alleged shooting incident fell apart.

Two weeks after Elix Murdoch appeared injury free at his bond hearing in a suicide for hire scheme, one big question remains in the Made for Hollywood Murdoch murder saga, was Elix Murdoch actually

shot? The disgraced attorney appeared without a scratch at his Hampton County bond hearing 13 days after the alleged shooting, raising major questions about everything we heard from Murdoch's attorneys, Jim Griffin and Dick Arpulian this month. Is he actually in rehab? Was he ever shot?

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Where did all of his money go? Did he really have a drug problem? And what are they trying to distract us from?

To recap on September 4th, 2021, which was a Saturday of Labor Day weekend, Elix Murdoch was allegedly shot. The South Carolina law enforcement division, which is the same agency that is investigating nearly all of the alleged crimes associated with the Murdoch family, released a statement the day after the shooting that said that Elix had wound was superficial. They never called him a victim. They never gave any suspect descriptions of the shooter. And they kept their statements simple, which to me was a hint that the story that the Murdoch camp was feeding the media was false. Around the same time, Alec Murdoch's lawyers Dick Arpulan and Jim Griffin started to embark on a week long spin campaign in an attempt to control the narrative and make Elix appear like the victim. They repeatedly fed the media a story that did not make sense that Elix was changing attire on the side of a rural Hampton County road when a man drove up to him and shot him. And way back in the fall of 2021, we started connecting the dots between the shooting and the double homicide. Not going to lie, it felt good listening to 2021 Mandi say this. Three months before the shooting, Alec Murdoch's wife and son were found murdered on the family's 1700 acre property in Collison County, South Carolina. Now that we know that Alec was stealing money from his own law firm and he had a hearing coming up in the boat crash lawsuit that would force him to reveal his financial situation, it's clear that Alec was facing an immense amount of pressure around the time of the double homicide. The question is whether

that pressure has anything to do with the double homicide. And keep in mind, Alec Murdoch is a person

of interest in that investigation. And he has been the only one that law enforcement has referred to as a person of interest in the double homicide. After Eddie Smith and Alec Murdoch were both arrested

in the alleged shooting, we saw for ourselves the kind of system in Hampton County that Alec Murdoch was used to. It was essentially kangaroo court with a judge who is of course a close relative of Alec's buddy Greg Alexander at the helm. Dick R. Putlian, who is Murdoch's high-priced attorney, argued that his client is not a danger to the community, but only a danger to himself. He painted Alec Murdoch as a desperate broke drug addict, while failing to mention how this desperate broke drug addict could afford him as an attorney. But anyways, he asked for a low bond and argued that his client didn't have any money. And guess what the judge said Alec Murdoch's bond

at? \$20,000. The exact amount that was online several hours before the bond hearing, which is not how it's supposed to work. Was there a fix in before the bond hearing? And while the prosecutor asked for a GPS monitor, the judge denied that request also. So while Alec Murdoch's bond was set at \$20,000, Smith's on the other hand was set at \$55,000 cash. So round one was a win for Murdoch. We forget about that moment sometimes, but it was important. I think the rest of the story would have played out just like that if there wasn't so much sunlight and pressure that finally made the South Carolina Supreme Court step in and have Judge Newman take over the Murdoch

cases. I honestly don't want to know how differently things would have played out if they kept the cases in Hampton County with local judges. It is scary to think about. The good news, though,

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is that we learned that sunlight works and we kept a harsh spotlight on our judicial system. And that is when Eric Bland and his endless energy really brought the heat.

He needs to be from the same trough of justice that every other citizen in our state eats from. And it's patently obvious exactly what happened through the documents that are now in the public domain that he stole \$3.6 million from my clients. More importantly, his own law firm in a public pleading has said he did it to other clients through the same exact method. So I got to believe in our state we want one system of justice and not two systems of justice, but the longer this guy gets to treat the facility and try to get himself better and could possibly still commit more crimes by getting rid of some of the money or figuring out a way that it can't be traced or found, then sooner or later somebody in our state is going to say, well, if you commit a crime with a pen, it's not as bad as if you do it with a gun. We got brave in the fall of 2021 and we got mad. We asked the questions that no one else was asking, like particularly, why hadn't Elik Murdoch been arrested for the Satterfield crime?

You don't have to prove every single crime committed before you arrest somebody and charge them with serious crimes. Prosecutors all the time add conditional counts. It's called supercilious indictments. It's done all the time, but it will send a strong message to all those that he may be working with to get rid of this money or however if we can commit these crimes. Our state is serious and we're arresting and going to hold these people accountable, but it's starting to be a joke. I mean, what more do you need? People go to jail when they utter a hundred-dollar fan check. So if \$3.6 million is not enough, is \$10 million from the Murdoch crime not enough? When isn't it enough if their goal is to get all these different co-conspirators or whatever? Well, then you arrest somebody and you put pressure on them and you make people roll.

That's what they do, right? You charge them with three things you could possibly do that's lawfully permissible. Alex Murdoch, I could sit down with a law book to come up with 15-20 crimes that he's committed that are serious felony with law, tougher, jail sentence. The eyes of the nation are on this case. And little by little, we started to see some accountability in the system. On the morning of October 14th, agents with the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division, also known as SLED, arrested Alec Murdoch and charged him in relation to the Gloria Satterfield case. Murdoch was charged with two felony counts of obtaining property by false pretenses. He faces up to 10 years in prison for each charge. According to a statement from SLED, the charges stem from a SLED investigation into millions of dollars of misappropriated settlement funds in the death of Gloria Satterfield. It turned out Eric Bland was really good at the whole podcasting thing and he said things that no one else was saying about Alec Murdoch and he reminded the world what these crimes were doing to the victims. It's a tremendous betrayal they're feeling and then they went to, well geez, they want to know, they want to believe that their mother died accidentally. They don't want to have to live with the thought, nor does the family, that their mother or sister was murdered. So they believed the explanation that the dogs caused the fall. And then today, it was this stark reality that this is a really bad person. Alec Murdoch is a really, really, really bad person. That's the bottom line. And that's a tough pill to swallow when you've seen this man walk around town like he's the cock of the walk. He's just a really bad person. There's no, there's no bottom to him. So Judge Newman was picked specifically by the South Carolina Supreme Court after that first round in Hampton County embarrassed the big wig judges in Columbia.

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When Newman stepped in, the game changed. The scales were finally no longer tilted in the Murdoch's

favor. After a short recess, South Carolina Circuit Judge Clifton Newman officially denied bond for Alec Murdoch. He said that Murdoch presented a danger to both himself and the community. He said he couldn't provide a bond at this time with safety of others in mind. Newman also ordered a psychiatric evaluation for Murdoch while he's behind bars.

Now this decision was shocking to many of us in the courtroom, especially the few of us who have been following the story since 2019. I've seen Dick Harpatlian and Jim Griffin represent the Murdochs

at four different bond hearings. Two of them were for Paul's B.Y. charges in 2019 and two for Alec's recent charges. In three of those other times, the judge gave them exactly what they wanted and no questions asked. But this time the judge took these two lawyers and many of us completely by surprise. It is not typical for a judge to deny bond in a non-capital case, but then again, this case is anything but typical. As we were driving back from the hearing in Columbia yesterday, Eric Bland called me. I just think it's a good day again for our justice system and I'll be confident that he will be charged with that search act and I'm confident that that may not be the end of it for him. Today was the day that Alec starts to get comfortable getting uncomfortable. He looked around the courtroom, there wasn't a friend inside the court. When he's going back to that jail cell and he's going to have to put a lot of things in themselves, who's there for me now? No one. That's what happens when you, you know, there's nothing worse than somebody who steals

from the family of the very woman who raised your children. He's just, he's despicable. He's just a bad, bad person. This judge listens. He was very deliberate and he recognizes, I said to him, I said, look, the eyes of the world are on this courtroom today. And so there, it wasn't going to be a too cartoony and lunch special. You know, \$2.99, you get a turkey sandwich and fries and you're out of there. You serve the full meal of justice. Of course, Dick and Jim fought Newman's decision and Judge Newman denied Alec's bond twice. That is when Eric Bland said the phrase cup of justice for the first time. Bland told me that he thinks Judge Newman's decision should stick. And on a broader scale, Eric believes that Newman's decision shows that the wheels of the South Carolina justice system are now spinning in the right direction. I think our justice system is now working as fully intended. That you have a judge that based on his background, views these crimes seriously to that they're not treating Alex Murdoch or his high power lawyers any differently than any other charged criminal in this state. And then Alex now realizes he's drinking from the same

cup of justice that every other charged criminal in this state must drink from. And that has the scare him because he can't manage his defense from a jail cell. And he can't manage his finances anymore because they're now in the hands of a court appointed receiver, who is in real time, you know, taking actions based on what Alex is doing. Like last Friday, they filed a motion to say the enforcement of those confession judgment. The noose is typing around Alex's name. That's that's noose of justice.

And while Eric was finally behind bars, we kept asking questions about the shooting and the double homicide. Turns out they were the right questions to ask. And what was the point of all of this? Was he trying to end his life? Was he trying to get drugs at the hospital? Was he trying to do

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something to get the public to feel sorry for him? Or did he want people to believe that drug dealers were after him and his family? Or was all of this just a big distraction from the double homicide investigation? At this point, everything became so overwhelming. I felt like I was constantly drowning and breaking news and the cases were multiplying at a rate that I couldn't keep up with. I am a competitive reporter. At that point, I wanted to be the first and the best to every Murdoch scoop out there, which honestly became impossible. But I was disappointed in myself when I wasn't first or best. Liz, who has been my best friend for years and my partner and helping figure out this Murdoch mess behind the scenes, even when she wasn't working in journalism, gave up her career in law enforcement to work with us on the podcast. She could see me drowning and she did what good friends do. They step up to help you when it's really, really crucial. And it really matters. I love this clip when I introduce Liz for the first time. I can hear hope in my voice. Live from the kitchen table studio, I want to introduce you to our new Murdoch Murders podcast co-host, Liz Farrell. Liz is my best friend, role model, former work wife, and forever partner in true crime. Liz taught me everything I know about investigative journalism. She was there with me at the beginning of the story on day one, which was February 24th, 2019, the day that Mallory Beach died. Together, we started pulling at strings as we investigated the tangled web of the Murdoch family in Hampton County. Liz was sitting across from me on the day that we now know was so important, the day that I found the one public document connected with the Satterfield Settlement. I looked back and found Liz's first words on the podcast, and they were incredibly supportive and kind, a reminder that teamwork makes the dream work. We had heard a lot about the Murdoch family and their influence. We were told by our law enforcement sources, yes, there are good cops in the low country, that it was already looking like the fix was in on the boat crash investigation. When Mandy first found that filing, the words wrongful death obviously rang alarm bells, and it was exciting from a journalist's perspective that our team had discovered a new angle. But more than that, it was another example of why Mandy is such a good journalist and stands apart from most. She will go the distance and look under every rock to make sure she is getting to the truth of a situation. Mandy's immediate instinct was that something wasn't right with the filing. As we learned more about Ellick, there was a clear conflict of interest in who was representing the Satterfield family, Ellick's friend Corey Fleming. But we had no idea at that time just how much this one document would end up changing the entire course of Ellick Murdoch's story. Without that moment of Mandy discovering that filing and writing about it, this past Friday never would have happened. We'll be right back. From the second I got the phone call in June 2021, that Maggie and Paul had been murdered, it was really hard for me to sit and watch from the sidelines, though I guess you could say I didn't exactly sit and watch. Even though I was no longer working at a newspaper, I was very much reporting the story from behind the scenes and passing on information to reporters because I was so scared that this investigation would get swept under the rug. I was so scared that the Murdoch's narrative would win out in the headlines and then that would be that. It wasn't just hard to not be a journalist during that time though,

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it was harder to watch everything that was getting dumped on Mandy. She was shouldering so much and was in such unfamiliar territory for that entire summer and part of that fall. None of us had had any experience dealing with a story that had this level of national interest, and frankly I don't think many stories even compare at this point. So when I joined the podcast, it really felt no different from driving through the night to get to a friend or family member in need. It was just this really big rush of adrenaline and it was like, okay I'm here now, we got this, we can do this. During that 19th episode with Liz's and Eric's voices in it, I felt something I have never felt in over a decade of working in journalism. Validation, like I was doing something that mattered. I still get messages from first-time listeners telling me that they cried hearing Eric saying these words. So I want to play it again with the same message in mind that you can do this too. But you did it. You. You uncovered the petition. You wrote the article. You were the spark that lit the fire. Eric Carrion saw your article and went to his sister, Ginger, and started asking questions. And then the family asked questions and then they went to Mark Tinsley and then Mark Tinsley sent him to me. But Mandy Matney, you lit the spark. You took down Alex Murdoch. I couldn't have done it myself. I helped, I helped, I helped. He definitely helped. A whole lot.

With that motivation and momentum piece by piece, week by week, we started to learn more about each case. But the rabbit holes kept multiplying and getting deeper. There seemed to be rounds of indictments every month with new victims and new horrible stories. On the night before Eric Murdoch scheduled bond hearing for the 27 charges he faced in November, the 53-year-old was hit with 21 more charges, bringing his grand total to 53 charges. Eric Murdoch has been behind bars on charges related to the Gloria Satterfield case since October 14. Soon after the South Carolina

Attorney General's office announced the seven indictments against Eric Murdoch, we heard from several sources that the bond hearing scheduled for Friday morning was delayed. That is when Justin Bamberg descended like an angel from up above, just when we needed him, to help out Eric Murdoch's financial victims and be a voice for the voiceless.

On December 16, Justin dropped a press release where he pretty much went for the jugular. In his news release, Justin attacked the good old boy system that enabled Eric Murdoch's bad behavior. He said Murdoch literally PMPED people's pockets. And he asked victims to email him at PMPED mypockets at Bamberglegal.com. What Justin did here, it might be hard for people outside the state to understand just how bold of a move it was. He not only told the victims in the state that he was willing to go up against the great and almighty firm, he sort of did the unspeakable on his press release by openly using the let's call it alternative pronunciation of PMPED, which is pimped, pimped people's pockets. And then he created a dang email address for it. People's access to justice for being made whole. People's access to having someone fight for them should not be contingent on who's on the other side. And there are individuals in that office that, you know, I know, I respect. This is about the entity. And this is about the fact that people were done wrong. There's an underlying context associated with the practice of law, in my opinion that is hanging in the balance here. And South Carolina has been known as a good old boy state for a very long time. I mean, that doesn't matter whether you're talking law politics or what. And I've never really been in the good old boy system here. It is what it is. At the end of the day,

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Alec Murdoch was a member of the firm. He presumptively put money up to help fund the operations of the firm. And quite frankly, the firm profited from Alec's misdeeds. They're on the hook here. And soon after Justin got involved, just when we thought things couldn't possibly get worse with Alec Murdoch, that is when we found out about Hakim Pinkney. We need to talk about Hakim Pinkney. Out of all of the Murdoch stories that have come to light recently, this one hit me the hardest. As attorney Justin Bamberg showed me a paper trail of evidence that appeared to indicate that Corey Fleming, Palmetto St. Bank, and Alec Murdoch stole from Hakim's family, I got really sad and taken aback. Who steals from a deaf quadriplegic man's family? And just how evil are these people?

Hakim Pinkney was an inspiration. He spent his whole life overcoming the odds.

That's his mother, Ms. Pamela, who was kind enough to talk to us about her bright and beloved son, Hakim. Before Brassa Lafide and Corey Fleming were charged in the financial crimes, we aired this episode, which painfully showed the victim's perspective of Alec's crimes.

How the crimes were so beyond stealing someone's money. They were crimes that truly traumatized people. I mean, to totally be honest about it, the way I feel is like I just got the news that my son just passed away and I'm just going through the motion all over again. That's just how deep the pain is, but it's two times harder because I'm going through it on a second phase again.

You know, I never thought I would have to relive this again. I thought I could just put my past behind me and press forward and move on with my life. But it's just so complicated to know that you put your trust and your emphasis on someone that says they have your best interest.

Look you in your face. Tell you and your entire family that you have our best interest. We don't have anything to worry about. You got us 100%. And then you go and you steal from us, even though you got paid through legal fees and all this to work the case, you turn around and you steal on top of that from the family. And my son is deceased. That really, it tears me apart little every day. And Justin Bamberg, he said exactly what all of us were thinking. Just think about it, right? Like, Hakeem dies on October 11th of 2011. Okay, these checks that were payable to Palmetto State Bank were written after that. Everybody knew we got a horrible death. Can you imagine being Hakeem? And this is what makes me angry. Can you imagine being Hakeem and your ventilator is unplugged and you're sitting there and you can't talk and you can't move and you can't hear but you're suffocating. It gets me so upset to think about and put myself like put myself in his body in that moment. And then to know that his mom has to think about that too.

And then you steal her money, you know, and then in 2017, you've got more money that's supposed to

go to her. Not that money fixes any of this, right? Money doesn't fix any of it. These people, she would rather have her son than have a penny of money, right? All these people who went through

these horrible, horrible accidents and got hurt and I had to have my back fused. I'd rather have a good back than have money. You see what I'm saying? In this situation, Mandy, she has to come to grips

with the fact that my son will never be the same and now my son is gone and all I can get is money and she's got to come to grips with that. I've done wrongful death cases, right? And it is hard as the lawyer to talk to the client about the value of life in terms of settling the case

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or in terms of a defendant paying money like it actually makes things better. It doesn't make things better. It's the system that we have, right? It's our only option for Corey Fleming, Alec, a metal state bank to know all of this and not do things the right way to give them every penny of what they're supposed to get. It is infuriating. It is disgusting. It is heart breaking. It's cold. It's callous. Like people forget that at the end of the day, right? And I don't, you know, people believe different things. Me personally, I'm a Christian. I have strong beliefs in that regard and I try to live my life a certain way. Every knee shall bow at the end of the day and it feels like people ain't thinking about that. You know, thou shall not kill. You know, don't steal. Do unto others as you have them doing to you. And even if you don't believe in anything, you still want to be a decent person, you know, and if you would steal money from somebody in Hakeem's position, what wouldn't you do? That's what I've been thinking about. What wouldn't you do?

Because that's cold. That is cold as hell to do that.

Cold as hell describes so many of the crimes that we have uncovered in the past few years.

There were countless moments when Justin and Eric said exactly what needed to be said, like this time when Justin called out Palmetto State Bank. You know, Palmetto State Bank has foreclosed on people's property before, you know, so obviously they know how to count money and determine how much money they're due. They don't know how to keep up with how much money other

people are due or rustle the feet. Doesn't know how to keep up with how much money the subject of his conservatorship are due. You know, something in the milk is not clean in old country saying something in the milk ain't clean here. There was a lot in the milk that ain't clean. As Alex Crimes came to light, we started digging into his past. We got a better sense of who he was and how he became this criminal who got away with so much for so long. It was kind of like if you were in his group and he was buddies with you, then it was all good. But if you weren't, he just, he just thought he was better than everybody else. I mean, he would be like, my name's Alec Murdoch. I can do

what I want to or my daddy's Randolph, you know, he's the solicitor and my granddaddy was too. And

he was very much so from the get go. And I met him at freshman orientation, which is before you start school, you know, in 1986. So I knew him the whole time I was there. He was like in my little group. I could tell then, you know, like, who is this guy? I think, I think anybody that you talk to that is, that is, you know, our age would say the same thing at school that were that was in school with us. I mean, he just had that reputation of being arrogant, didn't he would, you know, know, just no compassion or whatever. Like he just didn't, he didn't care. And he didn't feel bad about it. And he was just very, you know, he just, he was Alec Murdoch. He'd do what he wanted.

So everybody knew who Alec was. Yeah, he just, he just, he just never got in trouble and knew that he could get away with. I mean, he would blatantly say, we can do whatever we want to because we won't get in trouble. During this time, as we were trying to figure out who Alec was and how he became this horrible, Liz had a genius idea to foia for his jailhouse tapes. And wow, they were telling this is when we all learn for ourselves just how manipulative Alec could be and how he continued to call the shots from behind bars, especially when it came to

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liquidating his assets. Here is one of his calls with Buster.

And I'm driving to Charleston in the morning to pick up the check to the boat.

You're going to apply that too? Correct. I mean, I don't see how they bustle and everything's being applied to the bank. Yeah, I mean, 10-4. So all that'll be done, all that'll be done by lunch tomorrow. That makes me feel better. So it'll be 3.50. How much has been put on it so far? Dad, I don't have an exact figure. You know, a couple tens of thousands maybe, you know, just selling pieces of equipment. I love you.

The calls are also where we learned that Alec had paid Columbia attorney Butch Bowers to help him get Buster back into the University of South Carolina School of Law, something that might have worked had the public not found out about it.

Is Butch paid all the money that he was owed? Yes. Up front, and it was up front, and it was 30 grand up front and 30. I mean, with the contingency on it that was successful, I'm sure I don't want to call him, but he got the shit he has. He's straight there.

No, he knows he's totally paid. I mean, would he be willing to do something like that, you think? Absolutely. But I would do it yourself first.

We also heard about Alec's amazing workout routines in jail, over and over and over again.

I'll tell you what I started doing. You'd be proud of me. I really started exercising pretty dang hard. I mean, like, I mean, I was like almost two hours and 40 minutes today, just because we were shut in the room this morning. But I mean, I've been like an hour and 15 or 20 minutes a day. Hey, but that's good. That's very good. This is the start of my, I started on Friday to 12. And I mean, I can tell a distinct difference already. You know, when I had an exercise in 25 years. Yeah, but hey, I'm not me either, actually. And I mean, and both laying around in rehab, and then really, from the, so for 38 days, I did very little. The last, right, the last about seven, I was up a lot more, but I still wasn't doing anything strenuous. So that's right, right in a week. And then when I came in here, obviously thought I was getting out on the 19th. So I didn't do anything. And then I thought I was getting out shortly after that with Donna Maddox, you know. So I didn't do anything for about two and a half weeks in here.

Right. Really, it's longer than that. And then I started doing a few push-ups. But for some reason, it made my head hurt after about a few days. But now it's not doing that. I guess I've got told me that I've gotten in better shape. And let's not forget the moment when we've learned that not all lawyers paid attention in law school or watched legally bond.

They at least told me, they came to see me yesterday and told me that the Supreme Court, you know, they found a, I've heard of this dude, but I didn't know what it is. You know what a habeas corpus, a rid of habeas corpus is? I know something directly to the Supreme Court about other than that. No, I don't know. And one of our favorite moments when Buster told us all that he knows exactly who his dad is. I get what you're saying, but I mean, I may be with somebody, I give them \$15. See, I can only do \$60 on my account. I understand. I'm just saying, and I'm not saying you are. I mean, I just really hope you're not in there doing anything you shouldn't be doing. Oh no, I'm not doing anything. I promise you, that's not the case. All right. Well, let me call her real quick and tell her to be on the lookout. And I would, do you have a, do you have an idea of like time in there at all?

Our release of the jailhouse calls made a lot of people angry.

Namely, Elik and his apologists. Immediately after our episode ran, Elik filed a lawsuit

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in federal court to stop his other phone calls from getting released. That strategy worked until we finally forced the issue and called them all out. What's a good way to keep Elik and his attorneys from misrepresenting the truth? Invite the public to have a listen. Elik and his attorneys never expected that anyone would foyer for those calls. Therefore, we were able to show the public, Elik, in his most authentic form, or at least as close to it as we could get. Those phone calls showed a man who seemed to think nothing of breaking the rules in jail and who clearly didn't get the message that he was impecunious. Those calls also directly contradicted many of the claims that Dick and Jim made to the judge to get Elik out of jail, which is important to know. Remember when they told you Buster had no money? Remember, they said their client had no money. In a Dick and Jim ever wanted you to believe that they were doing this work for Elik out of the goodness of their hearts because their poor, poor client could not afford them, the jailhouse phone calls said otherwise. Predictably, the rest of Elik's calls, the ones made between the time we foyered for and published the first round, not only gave us more insight into how awful Elik is as a human being, but how single-minded he is when it comes to getting the system to work in his favor, or in Buster's favor. Remember his protracted effort to get Buster back into law school? I mean, would he be willing to do something like that, you think? By the back end of this week, can we get into the middle of next week, when something's got to be done for me to reach? That's what I'm saying. When do classes start? January the 5th. 5th? Yeah, that's right. Really, you need to send it tomorrow, and if you haven't heard from him by Friday, and I'd say something real nice, just like, hey, just following up on my email, I know this is a busy time of year, but was hoping we could meet soon, just like that. Just so we could get a meeting set soon. Or reset soon is what I'd say, and then say thank you for your attention. Something real nice like that. After the county jail finally released the calls we had foiled for, the calls basically stopped. It was very obvious to everyone that Elik had found a new way to communicate with his family, a way around the jail's phone monitoring system. Almost all of his calls moving forward were made to Jim Griffin's office, which automatically classified them as attorney-client privilege. To this day, we still don't know for sure whether he was having Jim's office make three-way calls for him, and we still don't know whether the Sheriff's Office, Attorney General's Office, and Office of Disciplinary Counsel ever looked into this. While the fight over the phone calls was happening, we were in a constant state of waiting for those murder charges, but also for charges against Elik's alleged co-conspirators. That was one of the many tests. Would South Carolina's legal system be willing to finally police itself and send a message about what behavior is and what behavior is not tolerable? Or was this just going to be yet another thing that got swept under the rug? Starting in September 2021, it was obvious to us that Elik's best friend Corey Fleming

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should face charges for his alleged role in helping Elik steal the settlement money from the Satterfield family, but each month passed without any indictments.

Finally, in March 2022, we got our Golden Day for Justice, as Eric Bland put it back then.

The state grand jury took on Corey Fleming.

Corey played a fundamentally important, material, absolutely imperative role.

Could not have happened if you had an attorney who did their duties according to rules of professional conduct.

If they said to Elik, don't you talk to my client.

That's my client.

Don't you do disbursement sheets.

That's my job.

Don't you talk to the structure insurance company.

That's my job.

Don't you pick the personal representative for my client.

That's my job.

And he's one of the last clear chances.

Al's could have been, like he is, the biggest thief in the world, but it could have been stopped by Corey and like I told you before, if Corey's asleep at the wheel or he wants to say he's ignorant or willfully blind or too trusting. I'm not sure I believe that.

And Chad Westendorf, all he had to do was say, the check made out to me, I want to see all these documents because that's what I'm supposed to do as a PR, show me the structured settlement documents from the insurance company, the annuity company and Forge.

Chad could have put an end to this.

And then when Chad, if you want to say they picked it done, like Chad is, well, then Judge Mullin, she could have stopped all this.

She could have simply asked, how is it possible that there's \$11,500 in expenses in December of 2018 when there's no lawsuit?

After Corey was indicted, we then found out that he was fighting really hard to hold onto his law license in Georgia, where it had also been suspended.

In an epic letter to the Georgia bar, Corey admitted to making professional mistakes, but he denied knowing that he had been helping Alex steal his client's money.

So this letter needs to be bound and printed and distributed to every debate club in America.

It's like one of those TikTok videos of cats delicately maneuvering their way through a cobweb of string.

It is so epic that it reads like satire.

You guys know how worked up Eric Blaine gets when he's talking about what Corey allegedly did. That's because what Corey allegedly did in this case is so obviously and egregiously wrong and against the rules of professional conduct.

Corey's lawyer trying to claim that here in South Carolina, this was basically cool to do, is as ridiculous as trying to return a box of cheez-its to Bloomingdale's.

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We know you didn't buy that here.
You know you didn't buy that here.
Plus, you ate all the cheez-its.
So what are you doing?
In Corey's letter, we found out something else that Alec had contacted him after the so-called roadside shooting.
Alec's messages to Corey felt oddly intimate and overwrought, almost like a Civil War soldier's love letter to the woman he had left behind.
That led to one of our favorite David Reads and one of our favorite production moments.
Dear Corey, happy Thanksgiving to all of you.
I'm so sorry for all the damage I have caused you and your family.
You were the last person I would want to hurt and I know I did.
I'm still not sure how I let all this happen.
I think about you all the time.
I miss you more than you could know.
I hope you are doing as good as you can under the circumstances.
Let Jim know if I can do anything at all to help you in any way.
Love and apologies to Eve and the children as well.
Just wanted to say hello.
I hope I get to see you or talk to you soon.
I miss Maggs and Paul so bad, but I am more proud of Bust than ever.
He has been so strong.
Not sure how he does it, given all I've put on him.
Check on him if you get time and feel like it.
All my love, Alec.
In this whole Alec Murdoch saga, there haven't been a lot of big laughs, but we'd be lying if we said that making that episode wasn't entertaining for us.
We could not stop laughing at how ridiculous these men were.
Alec actually introduced us to a bunch of ridiculousness.
Remember when we found out he had bought a funeral home?
It obviously raised questions for us, such as this one.
Why did Alec Murdoch buy a funeral home in Georgia?
I swear there was one brief moment where I pictured grabbing my dog and my passport and moving to New Zealand, where Alec could never find me because he probably doesn't know that's a country.
Another important question it raised, is this where some of that allegedly stolen money went?
So get this, it might have been.
Here's why.
Within the hour of me publishing this story, I got a text from Mandy.
She was like, you're not going to believe this.
The funeral home guy is the father of one of Alec's victims, allegedly.
It appears that Alec Murdoch loaned money to a family

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from whom he is accused of stealing nearly \$600,000 from.
And as we found out a day later, that family,
the alleged victims of one of Alec's schemes,
says they paid back the money to Alec, the alleged thief.

I mean, how perverse is that?

Okay, so twist number one.

Alec purchased a funeral home on behalf of someone else.

Twist number two.

That someone else is the father of Deon Martin,

who was a teenager in 2013,

when Alec represented him in a personal injury case.

And Alec is literally facing felony charges

for taking almost \$600,000 from him in 2015 and in 2016.

Twist number three.

After not answering the subpoena or the follow-up letter,
John Martin hopped to it.

The day after we published the story,

he contacted us at Vitz News and gave us a whole bunch
of paperwork that he said proved he and his wife
had paid back Murdoch.

But soon after we received that email from Mr. Martin,
the receivership team withdrew their motion.

Now, twist number four.

Turns out the Brunswick, Georgia business

is not the first time Martin's funeral home

has had a secondary location.

And honestly, you guys are not going to believe this,
but here it is.

In 2009, after years of people whispering about this,
an investigation was opened,

and the rumors turned out to be true.

Five years earlier, this man, James Hines,
died at 60 years old.

He died of skin cancer.

He was a preacher and even a guitarist in a funk band.

He lived in Allendale.

So this funeral home called Cave Funeral Services,

which no longer exists,

and you'll understand why in a second,

handled the arrangements.

At the funeral, Hines' body was displayed
only from the chest up.

He was in a regular size casket,

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which was notable because Mr. Hines was a big man.

He was six feet, seven inches tall.

How did they get Mr. Hines to fit in his casket?

An unlicensed employee who turned out to be the father of the funeral home director used an electric saw.

Yes, I'm serious.

He used an electric saw to cut off Mr. Hines' legs

between the ankle and calf,

and then he put Mr. Hines' legs back in the casket with him.

So it took five years,

but finally the coroner exhumed Mr. Hines' body

to verify this, and sure enough, it was real.

We'll be right back.

And remember Ernie the attorney and Judge Carmen Mullen's highly unethical handling of his case?

Ernie was a disbarred attorney on Hilton Head Island with apparent mental health issues.

In 2017, his landlady called the sheriff's office

to have him removed from her property,

but deputies had no grounds for his arrest.

They didn't have probable cause,

but Judge Mullen, who lived in the neighborhood,

decided to take matters into her own hands,

even offering to sign a bogus warrant to have Ernie arrested.

She all but ordered those deputies to do her bidding.

In episode 65, we played audio from the deputies' dash cameras,

so you guys could hear it for yourselves.

Again, nothing seems to have been done to address this with Judge Mullen.

She continues to rule on cases despite this evidence

that she appears to have abused her authority

and despite the many questions that have been raised

about her conduct from the bench.

It is really frustrating to see the state supreme court

repeatedly look the other way when it comes to Judge's behavior.

To keep ourselves from screaming,

we have to find some light in the dark, meaning we need to laugh.

That is where Liz comes in.

We've made a lot of serious points on the show

that have resonated even more with people

because we delivered them through Liz's hilarious takes.

Here is one of my favorites from episode 66.

First, we have to tell you something funny

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that we didn't mention before.

A woman apparently fell asleep in the courtroom while Jim Griffin was giving his arguments.

We have no idea who it was or why, but Judge Newman stopped Jim so that the sleeper could be escorted out of the room.

And guess what?

A woman falling asleep on Jim was, in addition to being the least surprising event, also not the most hilarious thing to occur in those two hours.

Then there was this unforgettable line.

You know that part of your brain that kicks in when you're about to do something bad?

The part that says,

hmm, you might not want to do that because there could be consequences and also on being recorded.

I don't think Ellic has that.

Ellic has lived his entire life believing he was the prince of the country, Ginger's, and it is well established in Low Country Lore that the Murdoch boys could get out of whatever nonsense they got themselves into.

And there was her response to a joke told during Russell Lafitte's state bond hearing.

Matt Austin, Russell Lafitte's attorney, quickly responded to Justin's speech and he made jokes.

You know, Mr. Lafitte likes to hunt and there may be some danger to local turkeys, but there's no indication that he is a danger to anybody else in the community.

He hasn't been charged with doing anything that's physically violent.

I know we sometimes make jokes on this podcast, but we're not the ones sitting on a remote screen in a courtroom with handcuffs on and in a jumpsuit that makes us look like Kermit the Frog's mechanic.

Alec also introduced us to a wild cast of characters.

There was Corey, Eddie Smith, Chad Westendorf, oh, and Gregory Alexander, the Yemisee police chief who Alec had given

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a \$5,000 check to just weeks after the double homicide.
Now, Chief Alexander says that check was a loan to his father,
but the Greg Alexander situation still bothers us
because one, he's still the police chief
and with that comes a whole lot of authority.
Two, he was previously indicted for public corruption,
but was found not guilty in Hampton County
after Alec Murdoch and his father,
former solicitor Randolph Murdoch,
sat on Gregory's side of the room during the trial.
And three, why did Alec give Alexander \$5,000 at that point
in time?

At a time when he owed so much money to so many people.
He owed \$792,000 to his best friend Chris Wilson
for another crime he allegedly committed.
So what could have possibly been that important
for Alec to give Greg \$5,000 in July of 2021
when he was in a lot of debt?

How did that check not bounce?
Just kidding, none of Alec's checks ever bounced.
But in all seriousness, at the very least,
Greg Alexander will be remembered for one thing
and one thing only.

And that is this quote.

He's not a cat.

He doesn't cover up Do-Do.

Oh, and remember this moment?

Okay, did you understand that as a personal representative
that you were a fiduciary?

Do you understand the term fiduciary?

I did not.

Okay, do you understand it now?

Not really, okay.

That you owed duties not only to the estate
who you were a personal representative for, right?

Yes, sir.

But did you realize that you are an officer of the court?

Did you realize that?

I did not.

Okay.

We had lawyers who had never heard of habeas corpus
and we had bankers who could not define the word fiduciary.
We also had Russell Lafitte, king of the fiduciaries,

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who was indicted by the state grand jury in May 2022 and by a federal grand jury in July of 2022. Remember when Russell's wife stood before a federal judge to plead for her husband to have one of his two ankle monitors removed? We had our friend Maggie Washoe read Susie Lafitte's speech and boy did Maggie capture the tone of it. Misconception number one, that we live an extravagant lifestyle. We do not live an extravagant lifestyle, nor do we have access to a mountain of cash. We presently live in a vintage at best double-wide trailer on our family farm. We have lived a comfortable life because we work hard. Most importantly, Russell Lafitte is not a danger to society. He's not cold or callous. He is kind and caring. He has never once been accused of any act of violence. He is a hero to his children and many of their friends. He is the person who anonymously purchases football practice clothing for the kid who's running laps, holding up his pants because he does not have a belt to keep them up. He is the person that our friends who is a single mom calls when she is out of town and her car breaks down and she does not have a family close by. He is the boss who drives to Augusta in the middle of the night to support an employee whose son has gotten into a very serious and later fatal car accident. He is the friend that drives to Florida and back in a day to attend his friend's mother-in-law's funeral. Not his mother, but mother-in-law. He is the son-in-law that Granny brings her cell phone to anytime she has an issue and that's pretty often. In fact, he is a gentle giant. For that episode, which aired in September 2022, we spoke to one of our favorite people, Elena Plylar-Spawn, for context. We knew that she would put Susie's speech into perspective for all of us. That word sympathy has always gotten me like, don't feel sorry for me and not in that aspect. Like your husband did what he did and I feel like he needs to take responsibility for his actions. And Susie asked his wife needs to take responsibility of her husband's actions to say, hey, he's not as perfect as I thought he was going to be.

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Like people do make mistakes.
Honestly, through this, and this is totally my opinion,
reading this transcript of Susie,
I don't think she knows her husband as well as she thought she did.
It's very bland and it's very like,
there's really nothing really personable in it.
So reading about that, she sympathizes with them,
but it's really that next line where she talks about
that she's off that her family has been victimized and all.
That's pretty shameful that you went to that level
to begin with because she has no idea.
She has no idea what it is to be victimized
by her husband, Russell.
Elena first appeared on MMP a month earlier
when she told the world about what Russell had done to her
and to her sister, Hannah,
in the years after they were in a horrific car crash
that killed their mother and their brother.
Elena's interview was deeply honest and truly heartbreaking.
We will forever be honored,
but she chose to share her story with us.
It was important to hear her voice.
Elec's alleged financial crimes
weren't just about moving around columns of numbers
at Palmetto State Bank.
Elec and his co-conspirator Russell
treated their clients like they weren't human,
as though they were just means to an end.
Here's Elena in that August 2022 interview with us,
talking about the time that Russell seemed to actually step up
in his role as conservator
and help her purchase a home at age 17
so that she would have somewhere to live.
Here's how that went.
He came to Columbia one day after we closed on the house
and we went and bought furniture and things that
you would need to start a house, basically,
so to make it somewhat of a home.
So we went and bought couches, beds, furniture,
those, your typical home items.
That was by far the coolest thing ever.
I really enjoyed that because I never really had anything
that was mine to know that those couches that I'm picking out

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are going into my home, like my safe place.
And that was the ceiling.
I don't think I'll ever forget.
We saw the receipts from this shopping spray,
which cost around \$18,000.
Russell put the items on his credit card
and got reimbursed from Elena's conservatorship account.
In the files, we found a single receipt for a sandwich
at Charlie's grilled subs in Columbia.
Russell, as it turned out, was like Elec
and that he saw no problem in charging a child for his meal.
I was blown away by that.
The reason why I was blown away by that
is I had spent all day with him,
probably paying for his time as it was.
And when my attorney, Eric, told me that I ended up paying
for this man's lunch, the man that was in a fancy suit
and just presented himself well and wealthy.
And I'm a 17-year-old girl.
And when I found out that I bought his lunch,
knowing that he was already getting paid to be up there,
I don't think he wasn't shopping for his house.
So I don't think he had the best time like I did.
But that bothered me in a lot of ways
because it would have been different
if I would have said, hey, I'll pick up the check.
But then technically, I wouldn't have been able to do that
because I was only 17.
I would have needed the judge's approval.
So even if I were to offer to, and I didn't,
but I'm just even saying,
if I would have offered to buy his lunch
by what Russell's always told me,
I always need court approval.
So that was kind of a slap in the face to me
that you put your food on my bill.
I don't know, I was bothered by that.
Like that wasn't even right.
Knowing everything that I'd been through,
I told Russell that I have been in and out,
not me being a criminal,
but I had to call the police on my dad numerous times
to get my belongings.

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Like I had been through a lot.
So just even in those few weeks,
and he couldn't take the time to just sit down
and let us be normal people and let me buy you,
you know, him say what I've got lunch this time.
Like I just, it's bizarre to me.
Showing once again that these guys simply don't get it.
Speaking of people who don't get it,
Bowen Turner.
In the midst of the Murdoch mayhem,
another horrible case was brought to our attention.
One that put a big spotlight on how broken our system is.
Bowen Turner, a teenager who was accused
of raping three girls at three different parties
in three different counties.
We first heard about this case in 2019 when he was arrested.
We were told back then that this was just another Paul Murdoch case,
a privileged boy protected by a system
that was built for people like him.
In Bowen Turner's case was not only an example
of the kind of treatment we saw the Murdochs
getting from law enforcement.
It was an example of how hiring a legislator attorney
in South Carolina is basically a getting out of jail free card.
No matter how guilty or how dangerous the client is.
For the Bowen Turner story,
we interviewed family members of Dallas Stoller
when a Bowen Turner's victims who unintentionally took her own life
after years of harassment from the people in her own community,
from adult members of their community.
This was one of the hardest interviews we have ever done.
We just kept looking at each other during it.
Neither of us could contain our tears.
She had a big enough heart saying that he was sick
and he needed to get help because she didn't want to ruin his life.
Even though he ultimately ruined hers,
she did not want to ruin his life,
but she knew he was sick and that he would hurt someone else
and she just wanted him to get help.
They were friends, they were friends before all this.
And I will never, I have to tell you what I'm saying Matt,
and I will never forget that because she was so good at,
you know, trying her very hardest and

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being so kind to everyone and just being that bright,
you know, shining star that she was.
And she always tried to see the best in people and she loved everybody
and I always, I know she asked me a few times,
she said, Dad, I don't understand when all this was going on
and the people were talking about her, adults, children, other kids,
etc. She said, Dad, I don't understand,
I can love people so much and they don't love me back.
And that's heartbreaking to hear that as a parent
and you don't know how to respond to that
because she sincerely believed that's how it was supposed to be
regardless of who you were.
And I will say this and I want this to be public for sure
that even after this happened to Dallas,
that she said, Lord's my friend, I don't want him hurt.
I just want him to get help because he's got something going on.
I don't want him to go to prison.
I want him to get help because he's my friend.
I think that kind of maybe tells you a lot about what her
character was, you know.
Bowen Turner's attorney, State Senator Brad Hutto,
did not, like our criticism of the super cushy and secretive plea deal,
he was able to secure for Bowen.
In response to an email from one of our listeners,
Senator Hutto defended his record and we let him have it.
I regret that you have been a victim,
but I have been there fighting for your rights.
I will not slow down in that effort and when the next battle arises
to protect women or victims, I will be there
like I have for the past quarter of a century.
I appreciate your passion and truly thank you for writing.
Too many of the uninformed have merely yelled,
but you responsibly reached out.
Here's the thing.
I think I can speak for many of the women in South Carolina
when I say we are tired of men who believe that we need them to fight our battles for us.
We do not need any more pseudo feminists who stand up for women
only when it suits their political agenda and then turn right around
and stomp all over victims when they're getting a fat paycheck
and when we need them the most.
Brad wants the women of South Carolina to feel like we owe him something
and he wants us to feel sorry for him because he's getting yelled at right now.
This is manipulation.

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The Bo and Turner story gave our listeners a real time example of what we're up against in South Carolina.

It was proof positive that we were not making any of this up.

The bottom line is that a certain group of South Carolinians get treated differently by our justice system and it's such a regular occurrence that those at the helm of the legal system don't even seem to realize just how transgressive it all is.

Instead they all try to normalize their unculplicity and it's been really hard to watch because when you pair that complicity with the likes of Alec Murdoch you get a complete and total lack of accountability.

But in the second Maggie and Paul were murdered we worried incessantly about this that this system of red carpet treatment would end up with Alec not being charged for the murders we felt certain he had committed.

From the get-go multiple sources, multiple good sources, helped us keep this story in the headlines because it was a way to keep people honest on all sides. Meaning we continued to put out information that we knew could paint the powers that be into various corners that would force them to follow through.

To let them know that we knew what was happening out there and if they were thinking of doing X, Y, or Z to get out of having to hold a Murdoch accountable well they'd better think again.

Early on we knew that Maggie had been lured to Moselle by Alec and we knew that there was a video showing that Alec was with Paul and Maggie at the kennels shortly before they were killed.

Here's an excerpt from episode 42 which aired in April 2022.

According to our sources Maggie told others that she was hesitant to go to Moselle that night but ultimately she decided it was the right thing to do.

It's not clear whether any of this information was found on Maggie's iPhone which appears to have been tossed in the woods near Moselle.

It was found the next morning by Alec's co-workers at the 14th Circuit Solicitor's Office with some help from Alec's younger brother.

We don't know exactly what happened after Maggie and Paul arrived at Moselle but we're told there is another piece of evidence that places Alec at the dog kennels on the property before they died which is contradictory to what he told law enforcement from the get-go.

In January 2022 we first put it on the record that there was physical evidence tying Alec to the scene of the Murdochs at the time Maggie and Paul were murdered.

By April we were able to report that that physical evidence was referring to Spatter on Alec's shirt. At that time we couldn't be more specific about what that Spatter was

but it was important to signal to the powers that be that we knew they had more than enough evidence to arrest Alec Murdoch and yet there he was still not facing murder charges.

With every new revelation we put it out there we caught a lot of heat something we become very used to at this point but over and over again our reporting would bear out

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meaning over and over we were proven right.

This might seem like a braggy thing to say and it is to a certain extent

but for us this notion has truly been a guiding light in our journalism.

Every time we have started to doubt ourselves or felt discouraged by the venom online this has been what we've turned to to keep going.

We're good at this.

We are good at it.

It was emotional for me to write these words earlier

because as a woman I feel like we're especially taught not to think this way.

It's unbecoming to note your own skill out loud

but I hope every person listening to this episode right now

not only knows in their bones that they are particularly good at something

but they aren't afraid to acknowledge that

to say it out loud and truly believe what they're saying.

For us it has been beyond validating having you along with us

seeing what we're seeing and calling it out.

By the time Alec's trial was in its second week

it felt like the whole world was watching along with us

as the truth began to reveal itself in epic fashion

and we found so much comfort in that.

We could do a year's worth of flashback episodes

on the trial's most notable moments alone but we don't have to because for us it can be boiled down to two short sentences.

I now know beyond a reasonable doubt that

Alec Murdoch murdered his wife Maggie and his son Paul

after a Colletín County jury found him guilty on all four counts.

He was sentenced to life in prison and that is a big deal.

I think the worst part about looking back

is that there is still a lot that we don't know in this story

particularly we still don't know what happened to Stephen Smith

but we have learned a lot about who he was

in the legacy he left behind.

He was amazing he was intelligent he was a clown

when he walked in the room all eyes are on him

but he loved trying to help people

he loved trying to make his own medication out of

because he didn't trust anybody he was putting out my body

but yeah and he was he loved books his room was a library

we had to put shelves on all four walls to hold all his books

and he would not put that book down until he was finished

he wanted to be a doctor but he said that he didn't because it cost so much money

to be a doctor that he would start out in nursing

after he finished the nursing he could get a job and then put himself through

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medical college and become a position for needy children that doesn't have insurance
we have been honored to have Sandy's voice of reason and integrity
time and time again on this podcast
if anyone knows anything big or small
about Stephen Smith homicide please I beg you to please call
Crime Stoppers and just tell us what you know
the people who do who do know something by now
they're probably mothers or fathers
and how would they feel if it was this same thing happens to their child
if people don't talk then you can't stop the violent
Sandy has reminded us even when things seemed really dark
that there is still good in this world and to always hold on to hope
I'll be here no matter how long it takes I'm still gonna fight
we mean it when we say that we will continue to fight for Stephen Smith until Sandy gets answers
it's a promise we made in 2019 and it is a promise that we will stick to
these 93 episodes have shown us that together with our listeners
we are a force to be reckoned with
and over the past two years both of us have learned so much
I know that I have learned to take time to listen to victims
and put them at the center of the story where they should be
I've learned that work is so much better and easier
with your best friend and your husband at your side every day
and that is a blessing that I will never take for granted
I have learned that fighting the good fight and changing a system that is broken is really hard work
but all of you have shown me that it is possible and absolutely worth it
I've learned that we don't have to agree with people politically
in the fight against public corruption that there is common ground in saying
enough is enough and together we can demand change in how our government specifically
our justice system operates I also learned that there's a lot to be said about not giving up
it's something I think we both learned from Sandy Smith and it's something that I hope
will continue to carry with us as we see this story through until the end
and as we take on these new fights for justice
Stay tuned because it's about to get even peskier
MMP Premium members get ready for happy hour this Friday
at 5 p.m. eastern time with Liz and I the pesky podcast girls
to talk about plans for our future show
and again reminder MMP premium is about to get so much better
and you'll want to sign up soon
go to mmp.supercast.com to join the very pesky party
we will announce plans for the next chapter early next week
to MMP premium members and then on the Murdoch murder social media pages
we will be back next Thursday on this feed that's about to get a makeover
so stay tuned stay pesky and stay in the sunlight

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you

The Murdoch Murders podcast is created and hosted by me
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