

[Transcript] True Sunlight / TSP #16 - Cory Fleming Sentenced To 20 Years for Stealing Satterfield and Pinckney Money + Alex Murdaugh Has a New Trial Date

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and unprecedented crime.

That is a very big deal.

My name is Mandy Matney.

This is True Sunlight,

a podcast exposing crime and corruption,
previously known as the Murdoch Murders podcast.

True Sunlight is a Luna Shark production
and written with journalist Liz Farrell.

Hello, hello! We have a lot to talk about today.

I feel like the whole universe shifted
and now we're back in the land of Murdoch Madness.

Last week, things really spiraled into chaos
when Diggin' Jim filed a long and shocking motion
accusing Clerk of Court Becky Hill of jury tampering.
Liz and I have spent days dissecting these documents
as the accusations against Becky Hill were very serious.

We also spent a lot of time rereading Becky Hill's book.

Did we find things that were concerning?

Yes.

Do we think there is a chance of a new trial with this?

Not at all.

Unless we hear new information
that wasn't included in that motion,
which could happen because Sled
is investigating these allegations.

We will do a deep dive into all of that in a future episode
because today we need to talk about the very big deal.

Cory Fleming was sentenced to 10 to 20 years in state prison.

I say 10 to 20 because he was actually sentenced
to 70 years today.

He got 50 years total for the Satterfield crime,
but each sentence will be served concurrently,
meaning he will only have to serve
the length of the longest sentence
and it will satisfy the rest.

The longest sentence was 10 years.

That sentence will also run concurrently
with his federal time,
which means Cory will delay going to state prison
by 46 months.

The most unexpected part of this was when Judge Newman
got to the Pinkney sentence.

Cory got a total of 20 years for those crimes

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and those will be served concurrently.
Again, the longest he got for the Pinkney case was 10 years.
So he will serve 10 years
and it will satisfy the rest of the sentences in this case.
But then the judge said Cory would have to serve
the second set of 10 years consecutively
to the sentence you're currently serving.
So the confusing thing is what does that mean?
Does it mean that he serves 10 years
and then another 10 years?
Not accounting for any sentence reductions
and early release and things like that.
Cory was not currently serving state time
when Judge Newman said that.
He was currently serving federal time.
So does that mean that the second 10 years starts
when Cory is done with his 46 months in federal prison?
We don't have clarity on that yet
and we are working on it and we will keep you posted.
But the important thing is that Cory is going away
to prison for a very long time
and he didn't get to skip out with just club fed.
I wanna start with the most important part of the day.
What Judge Newman so brilliantly said
before he threw the book at Cory Fleming.
Well, I guess we've been here listening to argument
and presentations and starting this goodness
about four hours or more.
And prior to that time I was submitted
the luminous materials to review.
The one thing that I did not review
is Judge Gurgle's transcript.
As much as I admire him and his capabilities
as a federal judge and the great work that he does,
I don't defer to the federal court system
for in making my decisions.
I practiced law for 24 years
and have been a judge for 23 years.
During my time as a prosecutor,
I've prosecuted police chiefs, probation officers,
professors,
and as a judge of sentenced church secretaries,
preachers, professors, law enforcement folks.

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But until I came down to this 14th circuit in March,
I never sentenced a lawyer.

So Judge Newman is saying,
one, this is in federal court and we don't play games here.
We do not defer.

What a line.

And two, Judge Newman is telling us
how much experience he has in court.

And with all of that experience,
he never sentenced a lawyer
until he sentenced Alec Murdoch
to life times two in March of this year.

Now I have a lawyer, co-defendant,
colleague of his facing 195 years in prison.

In addition to dealing with and sentencing all those folks,
I've certainly dealt with my share of grand larceny cases,
people who might steal an automobile,
facing 10 years in prison,
a shoplifter who after the third offense
they're facing 10 years in prison.

And I've had my share of sentencing people like the assailants
who were convicted of the crimes that was mentioned
and dished out a lot of time to many of them.

This was the moment I knew things were going downhill fast
for Corey Fleming.

Judge Newman was thinking about all of the crimes
that he has sentenced people for
and the money at stake.

He is saying if a guy got 10 years for stealing one car,
the Satterfield and Pinkney heist would have added up to
hundreds and thousands of cars
when you consider all of that money.

And this is a part of what makes this crime so unusual.

And the other part, it is a lawyer who did this
and used the trust of his clients to steal from them.

So this is my second time in these 47 years
having to deal with an issue of sentencing a lawyer.

And I cannot imagine a more devastating,
anything more precedent, this is unprecedented,
this is unimaginable.

This is, I think, the greatest crime for a lawyer
in the history of the state of South Carolina.

Certainly in the number of years being faced

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and the impact of the crimes on the citizens of the state,
I cannot imagine anyone going to a lawyer in South Carolina
at this moment in time and having complete trust
in what that lawyer says to them.

Of course, part of my years of practice,
I had clients come to me with, you know,
and they come and said that they didn't know
how much money they got on their case
that they went to the lawyer's office
and the check was turned over
and they just asked to sign the check.

So they came to me to find out
how much money they got in their case.
But this is totally unprecedented.

There's no way.

There was a case in this state
where the amount of thievery exceeded
what's occurred in this case.

So Corey was already squirming.

As Judge Newman was saying this,
his lawyer, Deborah Barbier,
had this look of defeat on her face already
and then Newman kept going
and he dropped another clue
that he wasn't playing games here
and he compared the impact statements
that were made on Corey's behalf earlier in the day,
which we will talk about to a funeral.

Now, the presentations on behalf of Mr. Fleming
were certainly inspiring.

It reminded me of the revival
that we had at our church last week.

It reminded me of funeral services
that I've had to attend,
particularly within the last year.

And I've heard a lot of testimonies,
so much so that they can go on and on
in churches, you know, at a funeral.

And so we asked people to limit their comments
to two minutes because everyone has
so many good things to say.

And most folks reminded me of what was said
in federal court,

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sort of a disregard to the dual sovereignty of the state court.
I didn't read Judge Gurgel's transcript. He's in a different system, a different sovereignty. I've never deferred to a federal court to guide my sentence as a state court judge. Now, for all of the great things that I've said, about Mr. Fleming, and I made the funeral reference because it's as if he's no longer with us, as if we're at a funeral, and that he will not have an opportunity to redeem himself. He will not have an opportunity to do good deeds. Okay, so when a judge compares your impact statements to a funeral, it's not good. And then it got worse for Corey. So much worse. Judge Newman started talking about the last time he was at the Buford County Courthouse just weeks ago for the Christina Pangalangan case. Christina was a special needs child who was left in a hot car to die by her mother and her mother's boyfriend, who were on meth at the time. As Judge Newman was telling this horrifying story, most of us were sitting there thinking, huh, I don't know where he is going with this, but it cannot be good for Corey. And it was not. Then Judge Newman so powerfully reminded the court that the pinkies were vulnerable like that little girl, and they were taken advantage of in the worst way. No amount of stories saying how good of a person that Corey was and how good Corey was to some can change that fact. We will talk about those stories in a minute. And so when I'm listening to Mr. Bamberg talk about Mr. Pinkney, I came Pinkney, I'm thinking of that same type of vulnerable ability that that child had. He was a child at the time, wasn't he?

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He was a lateen.

Yeah.

And so he placed his trust
and respected member of the bar,
a very respected member of this community.

And I could tell that by all of the folks here.

I sometimes say that there isn't very much between any of us.

We all have good and we all have bad,
and certainly everyone was here to tell me
about all the good and Mr. Fleming,
but we're dealing with the consequences of the bad,
and that is as bad as it gets in this case
for a lawyer who has a prior record.

He has no prior convictions,
but when you carry on a scheme of over a decade,
that's a record,
a record that did not result in charges of convictions,
but a record of his life.

And as bad as it was with Mr. Pinkney,
then we moved to the Saturn Fields.

Again, vulnerable people.

So I imagine, and I know that many of the friends
and family and colleagues were totally shocked,
not at what the good Corey Fleming has done
over a period of time,
but this Corey Fleming in these cases.

And quite frankly, when the people come to me
and learn to lay the burden on me,
say, Judge, please be lenient,
that's not my responsibility.

I believe in justice and mercy,
but leniency is not part of Micah's scripture.

Can you imagine being Corey
and after pleading to more than 23 counts,
thinking that you've outsmarted the system
by going to federal court quickly and getting a good deal?
And then all of a sudden,

you're sitting there in state court hearing Judge Newman
say the words leniency is not my responsibility.

And then he reminds the court
that you're facing a 195 years in state prison.

Then Judge Newman said this,
my heart bleeds for you because I have no doubt

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of the quality of human being that you are,
as reflected by all of the positive comments,
but you must suffer the consequences of your actions
in these cases that you're standing before me for
and tempering justice with mercy.
It's my responsibility to impose a sentence.
And there are so many,
if I were to spend time here now
with a sentence on each of these indictments individually,
we'd be here for a few hours probably.
So suffice it to say with regard to the satterfields
and my clerk here will take notes for me on count 10.
This is the moment when I honestly started wondering
if Judge Newman was about to sentence Corey
to the rest of his life in prison.
If your sentencing requires pen, paper, math, and notes,
it is almost never a good thing.
And it was not for Corey.
I want to talk about Judge Newman for a second
because he was the star of the show today
and he definitely was not trying to be.
This was the first time we were seeing Judge Newman
after Dick and Jim's jury tampering press conference.
And even though they were careful not to blame
Judge Newman and their rants,
it was clear that at the heart of this
they were trying to not so subtly
hint that the judge should recuse himself from Elix cases
and that they're trying to create a world
where Elix cases aren't heard until after Judge Newman retires.
Judge Newman.
But Judge Newman made it clear Thursday
that he does not defer.
He does not suffer fools.
And more than that, he's just a very wise man.
This was never more evident
than during one of Corey's impact statements.
It was one that really captured the gist
of not only Judge Newman's wisdom
but the cluelessness of the people who spoke on Corey's behalf.
Good afternoon, Judge.
I am Lisa O'Brien and I'm a Bufert resident
born and raised here.

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I met Corey and his wife and children at the Y.
I taught spin there for about 16 years
and he and his family actively participated in my classes.
In 2011, our oldest son was brutally attacked
and beaten and robbed in his home
in the middle of the night here in Port Royal.
I didn't ask for help,
but Corey knew my anguish.
He saw it on my face
and he approached me outside after class
and told me that he and his wife
would do anything to help us through this process.
She went on about all of the great things Corey did for her
and why she was there speaking on his behalf.
She cried, like so many others,
about how the crimes did not match the Corey that she knew
and how she would still stand up for Corey Fleming
even after he admitted to doing horrible things.
I would stand up for Corey in a minute and Eve and his family
because one thing in somebody's life that happens
a couple of times does not define them.
He is more, the whole picture of who he is
is more than this and this is terrible.
But this does not define him.
And I just ask for you to consider that.
But here is where Judge Newman was just purely brilliant.
He let her finish speaking
and then he asked her some questions.
There were five assailants
and they were apprehended the night of the crime.
They were caught by Detective Rue
and it took about two years to prosecute.
They did all plead guilty.
How much time, what was their sentence?
It ranged from 15 years to 20 years for all five.
15 years to 20 years each?
Yes, sir.
Well, each person was sentenced with a concurrent.
So they were charged with three things,
burglary in the first degree, armed robbery
and possession of a weapon during a violent crime.
The burglary first degree was 20 years for one individual
and the armed robbery 20 and five for the weapon

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and that process matched each person down the line.

How old were they?

They ranged in ages from 23 was the oldest person.

The youngest one was about a month from turning 17.

And what year was that?

2011.

Are they still in prison?

Yes, sir.

The first one will be released next year.

All right.

Thank you.

You're welcome.

We don't know this woman so we can't say for sure

but it didn't seem like she was aware

of what the judge was doing here.

It didn't seem like she was picking up on the irony

but we're sure Corey got it

and we're sure his lawyer friends in the gallery got it too.

Through his questions,

Judge Newman was reminding this woman

that actions have consequences,

that when someone breaks the law

and causes harm to someone else,

we as a society want to make sure

that they get held accountable for it

and we especially want that justice

when it involves one of our own.

This woman was standing up for Corey

by telling the story of how Corey helped her family

try to get justice for the harm caused to them

by these assailants.

And she did this while simultaneously

asking the judge to give Corey mercy,

to give Corey less time than the crimes had earned him.

Why?

Because Corey is one of her own.

It was okay to hold those accountable

for what was done to her son

but here in this case that did not affect her,

here she wanted a different outcome.

It was the same thing that was said in federal court.

These people, as Eric Bland calls them,

the country club crowd,

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told the court about the nice things that Corey had done for them but they still were very tone deaf. Another woman who knew Corey from the YMCA and who also spoke at his federal hearing told the court about how Corey helped her with her frozen pipes on Christmas Day. Turns out she was talking about the frozen pipes in her outdoor shower. We're so glad he got her through that tragedy. There were fewer people who spoke on Corey's behalf today because according to his lawyer they had to leave after lunch for other appointments. But again, there was nothing new here and that is where Debbie's strategy went so wrong on Thursday. She played the same game against a different team and it just didn't work. And she seemed to know it. She seemed occasionally flustered and even, at one time, accidentally referred to Corey as Mr. Guilty instead of Mr. Fleming. Remember in True Sunlight a few episodes ago after Corey's federal sentencing when Liz said that we were concerned that Debbie might have very godmothered Corey out of the state charges and that our federal government allowed her to do it for so very little in return. Specifically, we were really worried that Debbie was going to rob the South Carolina Attorney General's office of their ability to do their job and prosecute Corey for not only the 18 Satterfield charges but also the five Pinckney charges. And remember, Corey didn't plead to any Pinckney charges in federal court but he did pay restitution for them and let the Pinckney speak during his federal sentencing which we thought was a way of Debbie brilliantly paving a path to club fed for Corey. Thankfully, we were wrong. We'll be right back.

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You know how a lot of weight programs out there focus on what you eat?

Well, I love how Noom is using science to help you understand why you eat.

And that is a big difference.

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Though we will give credit
for getting so much closer to the finish line
than Ellic and Russell's attorneys did in Everwell,
she almost did it.

But she was out of moves.

Debbie ended up focusing a lot of her game Thursday
on emphasizing that Corey had already been sentenced
in federal court.

And by the way, can we just say one thing?

Shame on the federal government
for allowing this obvious bypassing of state accountability
in favor of softening the landing for these guys.

Shame on every single one of them.

The plan was clearly twofold.

The first step was to get a nice reduction
of Corey's 23 state charges
in a tight little package of one charge
for which he would serve very little time.

The second step was to get the state to drop its charges
or in lieu of that,

have Corey throw himself at the mercy of the court
while reminding the court

that he has already been sentenced for these crimes.

While Creighton argued that the state had the right
to hold someone accountable for breaking its laws,
Debbie argued that the state and federal government
want the same thing.

I know that the South Carolina Attorney General's office
and the United States Attorney's office
share the exact same goals.

The primary goals of those offices
are number one to protect the public
and number two to promote respect for the rule of law
and number three to deter and deter future misconduct
and also in the end to ensure that a punishment
that is sufficient but not greater than necessary
is imposed.

I submit to your honor that all of these goals
are accomplished in a concurrent sentence.
No individual, no individual should be forced
to serve two separate sentences
for the exact same illegal conduct.

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I want to address a matter that Mr. Bamberg and Mr. Waters have both raised regarding the Pinkney matter. The Pinkney matter was fully included in the state's sentence and Judge Gurgle made that extremely clear. It was included in the loss calculations. They were notified under the Mandatory Victims Act. The loss amounts were included in the loss calculations. The restitution was ordered on the Pinkney case. Ms. Pinkney and Mr. Bamberg were available to speak at the sentencing. They attended all the hearings that I'm aware of and they've been given treatment just as any other victim in federal court. That matter has been heard and it wasn't litigated because Mr. Fleming acknowledged his guilt in those matters. This idea that justice hasn't been served in that case, I take issue with that because it has. You don't order restitution in the case unless there's findings made and unless they are considered victims in the case and unless that conduct was folded into the sentence created by Judge Gurgle. Your Honor, what I would submit is that the desire to pursue dual prosecutions, it's within the discretion of these prosecuting bodies, but it also, that desire still has to be tempered by the rule of law. Justice, I would submit, is not served for South Carolinians or defendants by obtaining multiple convictions in a high profile case and requiring a man to serve two separate sentences for the same offenses. That, Your Honor, is consistent with the rule of law. I would submit, Your Honor, that, and there's been a lot of talk about this involves a state license and a state court system and state judges, and I don't disagree with any of that. Of course it does. That's why we're here because Mr. Fleming has admitted guilt in that. But when you look to, you know, who the, the United States Attorney's Office

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and the Attorney General's Office, who they serve,
they serve the public.
And it's not two separate publics, it is the public.
But here's the thing.
They don't have the same goals.
In fact, today proved to us
that federal court was exactly what we thought it was,
a soft place to land for the good old boy criminals.
Attorneys Eric Bland and Justin Bamberg
both pointed this out
in their individually remarkable impact statements
on behalf of the Satterfields and the Pinkneys.
Now, unlike federal court,
Eric and Justin were given time and space
to say what they needed to say.
Both of them made three very crucial points.
One, that there were real victims in these crimes.
Two, that Corey did not accept full responsibility
until he saw an easy out with the feds.
And three, this isn't federal court,
it's state court for state crimes.
And if we want to send a message
so that no other lawyer ever does this again,
leniency in state court is not the answer.
Here's Eric.
He fought these charges.
He wrote a letter to the Georgia Bar.
Now, unlike our South Carolina court proceedings,
the Georgia Bar proceedings are open.
I was a complaining part
because whenever I bring a claim against the lawyer,
for mathesans or theft,
it's my duty to notify the bar,
and so I notify South Carolina Bar,
I notify Georgia Bar.
So I'm part of the process in Georgia.
They want to hear from the complaining party.
So when Mr. Fleming filed his response
to the George Bar complaint, I got it.
It was a 57-page response that he did on the road.
Sort of tell the truth,
just like he's going to do when he stands before you today.
You know what he told the Georgia Bar?

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I was a victim of Alex Murdoch's death.
I had no idea what he was doing.
I was doing just like everybody else.
I didn't understand how to do the structure of Forge.
Mr. Wooder shared with you that February 2017 letter.
It was crystal clear, and he'd already done structures.
But even if you haven't done structures,
it says you can never get to check as the settling plane of lawyer.
It's got to go from the paying insurance company
to the annuity insurance company that's going to issue the structure.
Here they got the checks.
Like Mr. Wooder said, Forge doesn't get money.
They're a broker.
You don't send money to Forge.
He goes to an insurance company.
But in that 57-page response,
he says, I had no idea what was going on.
You know what he said?
I stole from my law partners.
I didn't steal from the clients.
When I stole those three checks of the \$9,500, the \$8,500, the \$9,000,
I was stealing from my law partners.
By the way, Judge, you read the rules of professional conduct.
We don't have a license to steal from our law partners, either.
That's another no-no.
So, I know you're a just judge.
I watched you.
I've watched you your entire career.
I know how much you care about our profession.
I certainly know how much you care about our state.
And this whole murder, Fleming, Lafitte, Tabaco has stained our state.
For Eric, it felt like this speech
had been building up at the back of his throat for years.
It was a powerful moment hearing it all come out.
And I'm going to leave with saying one thing.
The hand of one is the hand of all.
And Mr. Fleming is pleading guilty to every single charge,
which means every single element of every single crime
and every single fact that Mr. Waters has announced form the basis of those.
So, I ask you to do your duty.
To look at this as these are state court independent charges,
not to look at what he's been sentenced in federal court,
so that kind of takes care of it.

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These are claims that our citizens, the state of South Carolina, have brought through a grand jury advanced with our dollars through the South Carolina Attorney General.

And I'm confident that at the end, you will give that proportionate just sentence that deals with retribution to punish Mr. Fleming appropriately, but not overly so.

Determines to tell me and every other lawyer, you cannot steal from your clients.

These are to your clients, not to yourself.

Thank you.

I have to say, I got teary-eyed watching both Eric and Justin in court today.

I thought back to two years ago this month when I first met Eric Bland and was blown away by his energy.

And I thought back to the moment my friend Justin, who I knew as a local reporter,

called me to tell me he was officially in the game of the Murdoch Madness, representing one of Alex's financial victims.

I felt like a proud little sister listening to my big brothers fight for good injustice today.

The way they both gave Tony Satterfield a nod of confidence and pride.

When he spoke and forgave Corey, it was beautiful.

And a reminder of how so many of us have gotten so close through these tragedies.

And sometimes, how good people prevail.

Here is Justin explaining to Judge Newman exactly what Corey did to his client, Mrs. Pinkney.

And instead of being a supportive lawyer,

instead of showing compassion and care, empathy or sympathy,

he could have said to this woman, I am so sorry for what you went through.

I want to own up to the fact that I took some of your money.

No, he didn't.

In fact, they took the money and they went to the College World Series to watch baseball.

Meanwhile, this woman is still recovering.

She's still dealing with the loss of her son.

And no one cared.

And I've said this before, Miss Pinkney, myself, the Pinkney family,

no one, everyone believed that Mr. Fleming regrets everything that he did.

Not just to them, but to the Satterfield family over a decade later.

Nobody doubts that he regrets it.

It's hard to not regret your decisions when you're sitting there.

I think everybody regrets that, except complete social past.

We do not believe that he is remorseful for what he did.

There is a difference between I regret getting caught, getting in trouble, and true remorse for what I did to you.

When we hear these numbers, you're on them.

And we hear numbers like half a million dollars.

[Transcript] True Sunlight / TSP #16 - Cory Fleming Sentenced To 20 Years for Stealing Satterfield and Pinckney Money + Alex Murdaugh Has a New Trial Date

We hear numbers like three million dollars.

We hear about total amount of money stolen.

We have to remember that where we come from, and myself, Miss Pinkney, that I'm talking about geographically, where we live.

We're \$8,000 check.

\$9,600 check.

Yes, for privileged attorneys and others who either have been very blessed, or very successful, or work very hard to get there, it may not sound like a lot of money when you hear about four million dollars getting taken.

Minimal wage in our state, Your Honor, \$15,850.

If you're making minimal wage, that's how much you earn working for a year.

Some of the money that Miss Pinkney lost,

she would have to work over half a year to earn and then pay taxes all right.

This is not a small amount of money. This is not a victimless crime.

And again, Justin made sure he got it on the record

that Corey saw the federal court as an opportunity for him.

And let me be clear here, the feds let him have that opportunity.

Your Honor, we trust the system.

And I echo much of what your appliance said, that this was a black eye to attorneys.

It was a black eye to the legal profession. It was a black eye to our state.

But it was a dagger in the heart of the clients who trusted their lawyers.

Mr. Fleming knew he wasn't supposed to do it.

We firmly believe, and I've had in-depth conversations with Miss Pinkney about this, it wasn't until the federal government came,

and now there was this window of opportunity to possibly serve a citizen federal court that Mr. Fleming was then willing to say yes, I did XYZ.

Up to that, there was no yes, Miss Pinkney, I took the reins.

I wasn't represented to the OEC ethics as you heard, I mean land records.

It was the not and not and not. And one of the most difficult things for Miss Pinkney and every other victim

is having to know that you are truly a victim of bad acts from bad actors.

And then you hear those same bad actors who took bad acts say that they are a victim.

It's demeaning, it reopens old wounds, and it's highly offensive.

And in the world of white collar crime there are.

If we talk about Wall Street, it's not necessarily people stealing your money and you willingly give it to the investment actors.

No one willingly gave Corey Fleming their money.

He deceived them, he took it.

And Creighton Waters was on fire Thursday as well.

Big Creighton energy all day.

He knows this case like the back of his hand.

Like he did a few weeks ago in Corey's plea hearing,

Creighton used this amazing speeding analogy to show the judge exactly what Corey did

[Transcript] True Sunlight / TSP #16 - Cory Fleming Sentenced To 20 Years for Stealing Satterfield and Pinckney Money + Alex Murdaugh Has a New Trial Date

and why punishing him in federal court is just not enough.

And you may hear essentially that the state, the Attorney General, the state law enforcement division are being unreasonable because we refuse to accept and just check the box that Mr. Fleming was only doing 58. Instead insisting because of the hard work that was done by all these folks to really dig deep and uncover the truth.

The truth matters, Your Honor, the truth about what happened to the system matters. The fact that he was doing 90 miles an hour matters.

It matters.

It's not enough to just say, I did 58 and we say, okay, that's fine, we're done here.

What really happened matters when it affects the integrity of the system, when it was abuse of the system of the very courtroom in which we are in right now.

Your Honor, independent accountability for his abuse of his state law license and state court actions is warranted in this case.

Consecutive time is warranted.

Consecutive time is warranted for the extent of the reality of what Mr. Fleming did to the Satterfields

exposed in this courtroom, the 90 miles an hour, independent accountability is warranted for that. Above and beyond whatever was before.

I'll give Mr. Fleming credit for pleading guilty, but he doesn't get credit for the delta for the difference between 58 and 90 miles an hour.

And his inability and refusal to admit to that, to only admitting to the most mitigating version of events

that he can no longer deny because he's caught red-handed, that only should get so much credit, Your Honor.

And there needs to be independent accountability for the truth of what happened to the Sackfields. Above and beyond any other proceeding that has nothing to do with what happened here or what this procedure was.

Independent accountability is warranted for panel opinion.

As Mr. Bamberg said, has convictions relating to the conduct victimizing her in this court.

And while you may hear that in another proceeding they roll that into a PSR, that's not the same thing.

And we don't even get that. I don't know what's in that then.

It doesn't matter though.

A lawyer should not get one-stop shopping for victimizing multiple clients over the course of a decade.

It's not buy one, get one free.

There should be independent accountability here today consecutive accountability for Ms. Pinkman. He should not get buy one, get one free.

And independent accountability is again warranted for the state judicial system itself.

It must defend itself and have its own independent accountability and not allow someone when the state is unhappy with 58 miles an hour to just make a deal and that be the end of it.

I ask Your Honor for consecutive sentencing.

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I ask Your Honor that even if you run sentencing for the Satterfields concurrent to anything else that happened, that any sentence for the Pinkneys be consecutive.

I ask Your Honor not to let Mr. Fleming, who I think we have established has not completely come clean with the reality of his behavior and only admitted to what he's admitting to now because he got caught red-handed.

During his closing, Creighton Waters threw some serious shade at the feds.

He referred to federal court as down the street as if Corey was able to just trot down the street and strike a deal to bypass accountability here in South Carolina.

It was a big deal.

He said this on record as the struggle between the state and the feds continues in Murdoch land.

This was the AG's office saying in a big way, look what happens when y'all get these cases.

You make deals with the bad guys and where is the accountability in that.

And so when he talks about accepting responsibility, he's not accepting true responsibility and that is why there needs to be accountability in state court.

That is why that when the state said hold on Mr. Fleming, that doesn't fit with the facts.

That doesn't fit with common sense.

That doesn't fit with all we know about how this went down.

Mr. Fleming and we said give us some more information, give us some more time.

Mr. Fleming instead went down the street and made a deal to just bypass accountability in this courtroom, which this is where the affront occurred.

Mr. Fleming went in great detail and Mr. Fleming said it too about how he played guilty in federal court with no deals.

No deals.

And he talks about how the opinionings were considered in the pre-sentencing report, which of course the state doesn't have.

We don't know what was in that.

But when he leaves out, when they make this great presentation to you, how they play with no deals and therefore that's enough, just let the feds handle.

We just thunder nosed at the state, thunder nosed at our obligations in the agreement we signed and went down the street.

What he leaves out is that he was allowed to plead to a single lesser offense, one charge, zero to five years.

If you'd done one charge of what it should have been, that's a 20-year offense.

And even Judge Gurgle in the plea transcript on page 75, when they were trying to say, well there's no deals, we didn't do a substantial or a downward departure, says,

well, in some ways you've already given him a 5K, which is a downward departure motion, by allowing him to plead to the less serious offense.

One charge for zero to five years is not enough, Your Honor.

It's not enough for the reasons that I expressed to you.

It's not enough because of the difference between what was admitted to in federal court and what we have exposed here today.

It's not enough because of the difference that today is where there's the first real accountability, a real conviction for panel opinion.

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And it's not enough because the state judicial system needs its say for those who abuse.

I said before, a lawyer should not have a decade of conduct and get one stop shot.

For that reason, we submit there should be a lead sentence for the Satterfields and a consecutive lead sentence for the Pinks.

And that is how the state showed the feds how it is done.

That is how Creighton Waters, Justin Bamberg, Eric Bland and so many others work together to get Corey Fleming,

a sentence that would send a message to other lawyers in South Carolina who think that they are above the law.

That 20 year sentence should make a lot of bad people in the low country really nervous.

And that is a big deal.

We'll be right back.

So you may know we have been adventuring in Europe working on a new project and most of what we packed was, you guessed it, Viori.

From our morning runs through the streets of Lisbon in Corey Shorts to recording episodes of Cup of Justice in my performance joggers

or enjoying a taste of Geneva in my Halo performance hoodie.

We are operating at peak comfort levels thanks to Viori.

Everything is designed to work out in but doesn't feel or look like it.

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What's up? It's Kaylee Cuoco.

When it comes to travel, we all have a happy place.

I just went to my happy place.

I just went to Maui and it was truly amazing.

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If any of us had any questions about whether Judge Newman had an opinion on Dick and Jim's latest efforts to get Ellick a new trial,

or if you had any thoughts on the continued efforts of Russell's twin flame attorneys, Todd Rutherford and Mark Moore to delay Russell's trial until never,

we all got that answer within 30 or so seconds of the hearing starting on Thursday.

Crank waters began by introducing the first matter of business.

Why Russell defeat was here today.

Immediately, Judge Newman corrected him.

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This is when we knew that Judge Newman was not there to indulge idiot behavior.

Now, what is idiot behavior?

I'm sure we all have our own definitions.

For today, it's lawyers whose main objective it is to delay proceedings by any means necessary.

Not by citing case law or pointing to the rules of procedure or the rules of evidence, but by talking loudly with unearned confidence and using shell game arguments.

Picture your kids arguing with you over bedtime.

Now picture yourself paying them hundreds of dollars an hour to do that.

That's what it was like.

So before Judge Newman entered the room, Russell appeared to be engaged in, to quote Dick Harpool Ian from the murder trial when describing Paul Murdoch's Snapchat video by the Kennels,

convivial conversation with Todd.

Russell even appeared to be smiling, but when the hearing started, all that changed.

Russell crossed his arms and he looked stern.

Mark Moore crossed his arms and looked uncomfortable and Todd sat back with the air of a man who can make money simply by saying,

Oh no, sorry, can't do that on that date because I'm a state legislator.

While Crichton read Russell state charges into the record,

Russell helped himself to the courthouse pictures that were at his table and appeared to be downing water just so he'd have something to do with his hands.

He was there for a scheduling hearing, so what would he be so nervous about, right?

He's clearly dealt with worse.

Well, today was the first day that we know of that he'd be seeing Alec in person since all this started.

Alec is the whole reason Russell is in this mess.

He's the whole reason Russell is headed to Florida to start his seven year federal prison sentence next Thursday.

Let's pause here for a second because this is kind of funny.

Reporter Michael DeWitt tweeted the day before the trial that these hearings in Buford County Courthouse would be a criminal reunion of sorts, which is so true.

This was going to be a reunion.

And even though we were sort of dreading this hearing because we were prepared to be disappointed on some level because the federal sentencing hearings were so infuriating, this reunion was at least something to look forward to.

How would these guys act when they saw each other?

The crime boss, Alec, would be in the same spot as two of his co-conspirators, one of them in the same room at the same time.

Okay, back to what was happening.

Within a minute or so of Mark Moore speaking, Judge Newman stopped him.

Judge Newman was like, nope, let's put a pause on you.

Mark's argument was that they couldn't schedule a trial date now because Russell still hadn't heard from the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals on his motion to appeal his federal conviction.

So we're here to talk about the federal case. I'm here to talk about this case, the state case.

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I'm just telling you because they have some relationship to the judge.

What is the relationship?

Mark told the judge the relationship is that the evidence is mostly the same and that Alec's financial crimes haven't been severed from Russell's,

meaning that what happens in Alec's trial could have an effect on Russell's trial.

Judge Newman wasn't having that either.

You heard that, right? Judge Newman was like, yeah, that's what I just said.

This was the second time that we realized that he was not in the kind of soft and generous and perhaps tolerant mood that Corey's defense was likely hoping for,

and it certainly didn't help that he had Russell's shenanigans and Alec's shenanigans to deal with beforehand.

Instead of starting with Russell's tap dancing, we were going to start with Alec's now.

Russell got up and went to sit on the bench behind the defense table, and Alec's team took their place.

Then Dick's paralegal Holly came over and seemed to whisper something in Todd's ear.

He immediately hopped up, just as Dick was saying, bring in Mr. Murdoch.

Todd got Russell out of there, kind of.

He ended up seating Russell in that frenzy of a half second on the aisle at the front right by where Alec was going to walk.

It's hard to tell if the two looked each other in the eyes.

Russell did keep his head up, though.

Then he sat about 12 feet away from Alec, while Alec's attorneys went scorched earth on Judge Newman.

Which reminds me, the most horrifying part of today, toward the beginning of the very long hearing Thursday,

Alec Murdoch was shuffled into court wearing his prison pajamas.

This was the first time we have seen Alec Murdoch in state court since the trial in March.

He looked like prison Alec, short hair, cold face, blank stare, orange fit.

As he was escorted to the defense chair, he walked past Russell Lafitte and his newly appointed attorney,

State Representative Todd Rutherford.

You know, that Todd Rutherford, the one who made the deal that got Murdoch draw price out of prison

and sent the state into a very costly cleanup mode scrambling to find him, which they eventually did.

As Alec waddled his way to his seat, Representative Rutherford made it a point to stand up and shake Alec's hand.

Rutherford actually smiled at Alec.

He was bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, almost fangirling.

It was like he was meeting Taylor Swift, but it was Alec Murdoch.

The man convicted of murdering his family, the man accused of stealing millions from the most vulnerable,

the man who used and abused the justice system of South Carolina, the one that Todd Rutherford works for.

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Actions speak louder than words, and this action shook the building for me and confirmed everything I ever suspected about Todd Rutherford.

As a taxpayer of South Carolina, I was horrified to see this man who serves on the committee to elect judges in our state

offer a friendly handshake to a convicted murderer.

Todd Rutherford is one of the most powerful Democrats in the state of South Carolina.

He has been a member of the South Carolina House since the 1990s and currently serves as the House Minority Leader.

He has his own law firm, which specializes in criminal defense work.

Again, fine, we know that lawmakers have to make a living somewhere.

What isn't fine is seeing how many times these two worlds collide for these guys and how the public almost always loses.

No matter what anyone says, no matter how many times these guys try to convince the public that lawyer lawmakers don't have a special in with the justice system, we know that it's not true because we see that it is not true.

Over and over, we see what is happening.

Rutherford, standing up to shake hands with Ellick Murdock, tells us just how skewed our system is.

It also raises questions about whether Todd Stunt with Jarod Price could have been some sort of chess move for Ellick or Russell,

meaning let's see if we can use this new law to get a murderer out of prison early without anyone noticing.

But mostly, this is a politician in front of the world saying I can shake hands with this murderer who still has more power than the voters of South Carolina and I don't care what they think.

It shows that Ellick Murdock still has power and guys like Todd Rutherford are still going to stick with them even after a murder conviction.

Because after all, South Carolina is the land of no consequences.

And speaking of the land of no consequences, Dick was there prepared to give the full harpoonian experience.

The objective was to delay Ellick's trial on the financial crimes until, again, never, or at least until Judge Newman retired.

Here's how that went.

First, Creighton read Ellick's charges into the record.

It took a full two minutes and 41 seconds to do that.

He told the court that Ellick's cases remain a priority and that the Satterfield case was chief among those.

He also noted that the state was prepared to try these cases last April, meaning he made sure to remind Judge Newman that this wasn't their first visit to the let's delay everything Dumbo Circus.

Then it was Dick's turn to speak.

The audio was pretty bad at this point, so I'll just paraphrase what was said.

Dick was like, we have a bunch of objections.

What's the rush on this?

Also, our impression is that you're retiring January 1st.

Judge Newman was like, hmm, tell me about this impression of yours.

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Then Dick basically said, oh, if I got that wrong, I apologize.

And he immediately went into plan B.

Okay, retirement thing didn't work.

So now I'll tell him about how busy Jim and I are through the end of the year.

Dick told the court about how he has the oldest civil case in Lexington County that's scheduled for October.

He made sure to let everyone know this case was about the deaths of five children, probably in the hopes of earning some nobility points and sympathy from the judge.

Side note, by the way, these kids were killed by their father.

Dick is representing the mother and is suing the state's Department of Social Services.

Our state senator has been locked in an eight-year battle to get a big payday from a state agency, which would be great if it resulted in meaningful change to the system.

But is that what it's about?

Sorry, but this is a fair question.

Then Dick said this.

Your honor, you know, it's going to take some time to get ready for these cases.

But more importantly, maybe this is the toughest thing I have to say, and that is this.

This case was prior to finished six months ago.

Clearly, I don't think anyone in the state has had more publicity than any case in the history of this state and maybe the country.

On national television every day for six weeks, the motions are motions here and recovered.

And they're here again today.

It has been podcasted and blogged.

You know, we've got podcasters out there who are ribbing their 15 minutes, hanging by their fingernails wanting to mourn their 15 minutes of fame and continue to talk about this.

Would you look at this guy?

Now, we are not so vain as to think this song is about us because who's that sitting next to Dick?

Why it's Jim Griffin, the millionth place Murdoch podcaster who joined the fray after the murder trial,

after the 15 minutes were supposed to be over by Dick Harbootley's estimation.

And oh, what's that there?

Oh, it's the motion that was probably written by Phil Barber and Maggie Fox,

but that Dick and Jim are taking credit for asking for everyone to do all of this again with another trial.

I'd like to again quote Dick when he left the Colleton County Courthouse after elix sentencing and saw that there was no big gathering of media waiting for him and his team, like there was for the Attorney General's office.

Hey, where did everybody go?

It's all so wild.

After ranting about podcasters, Dick then decided to go for broke with Judge Newman who was not having it.

I understand one of the solutions to massive pre-dropper was to change the venue.

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And your honor, to try to try this case in less than a year after the verdict came in, in the other case, don't we need to let it calm down a little bit?

Where are you going to get a jury, Mars?

I mean, there's no way to get a jury.

Allendale, Orangeburg, Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton.

Appreciate your sense of humor.

There's not a sense of humor.

We have many counties where these indictments were issued.

I'm not presuming that a jury cannot be impaneled just as the trial that took place on Colleton County.

There was no motion to change venue.

I'm not presuming any prejudice and the test is not based on speculation.

The test is whether or not a jury can be impaneled.

We first have to attempt to get a jury according to the law.

What I'm saying is, I think it's being exercised until we,

I know if we've been interviewing jurors, as you know, in the murder trial, there was a jury on that jury who had been excused,

been on the jury panel in the previous year, and told another jury,

I want on this trial.

We'd like to interrupt this whining with a fun fact.

Of the 18 people who were chosen for Alex's murder trial jury,

seven of them said they had never heard of the case,

and every juror was asked whether they could put aside any opinions they might have to impartially look at the evidence presented to them.

Next, Dick brought up the elephant in the room and Judge Newman had a response for him.

And that, I'm afraid, is what happened on that jury.

We had a motion for a new trial for Alex to cover the evidence.

The Court of Judges, the Attorney General,

was going to file their response from all.

We believe the Court would be able to order a court before a certain court judge to determine whether or not the Court of Court tampered with that jury.

And that is very good.

And so we would go through with another trial while that matter ended, and that would be wiggy.

Probably not in Colorado County.

We are honored that the idea that somehow something happens in Colorado County doesn't affect what happens in Newport County.

I mean, this is a national case.

I mean, do they not have television in Allendale County?

I don't know.

I have the internet.

I don't know.

What's the hurry?

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That's another one.

What is the hurry?

He's bringing federal court next Thursday.

Every allegation the state has made,
the victims will have their day in court.

We plead, you know, we plead,
as we're not advocating, we plead building the state court,
but the state insists on doing them in serial
so they get free convictions so they get life without parole.

By evaluating or observing two licenses without parole.

This is just another attempt to get more publicity
to make this another national case.

In honor, I'm offended that the Attorney General,
he's got many other cases that are much older than this,
but granted, court TV won't be there for him.

This is another effort in creating a national spectacle.

Ooh, I have an idea.

Maybe Dick and Jim can discuss how offended they are
by this being a national trial with court TV cameras
when they're taking their flight down in Florida
to appear in front of true crime fans at CrimeCon.

Next, Dick seemed to accuse Judge Newman of being biased.

Now, your honor has some things to say about Mr. Murdoch at a sentencing.

You obviously believe he's guilty of that.

You obviously, in the Attorney General, are guilty of that.

But I would ask you to put those feelings aside
and give us a chance to eliminate this jury capping issue.

To allow Mr. Griffin and I to have time here
to join me in trial on the prepare for those trials,
which we won't encounter for the fall.

And third thing is why doesn't the Attorney General
put some distance between the conviction in the murder case
and the trial if there has to be a trial on the financial cases?

If you know of the prosecution, I'm bewildered by this.

I'm sure they can do it, but why? Why? What is the hurry?

He always has to throw in there that he used to be a prosecutor
and therefore knows better, I guess.

Next up was Creighton with Words of Beauty.

He addressed the fact that lawyers are just going to have to suck it up
because the world is different now.

And he put on the record the thing we all know is happening.

Dick and Jim are using the federal government
as a get out of South Carolina prison free card.

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Alec is planning to plead guilty next Thursday in federal court.

And like we saw with Corey's case,

this is all about getting Alec into federal prison

where the majority of the population looks like him

and out of state prison where the majority of the population does not.

We are in 2023.

The reality of the media environment is what it is.

And then Alec, we're going to say the judicial system

just can't function because of publicity.

That just leaves nothing left to happen.

This is just the reality that we live in.

And so what the defense can do is try to essentially run down the street

to the federal authorities and bypass the accountability

that needs to happen in state court for a direct assault

through abuse of a state law license on this court,

on the other courtrooms or the other counties that I name.

The state judiciary needs, the state judicial system

needs to answer for this very, the allegations of this assault.

And that's why this is important.

That's why this case has priority

and that's why the state seeks to move it forward.

This got Dick fired up.

He shifted gears and went for a classic tactic.

He put on his best outrage voice

and then ranted about something that the defense had requested in the first place

and was granted.

Well, this wasn't his argument a year ago

when he called the murder case first.

The murder case was guided after the financial crime

and it wasn't that important then.

Now all of a sudden, it's, you know,

the most important thing in the world.

I would suggest, Your Honor, that he made a decision

to try the murder case first, not the financial crime.

And as a result, wouldn't we be put in the position, you know,

of where we're at today?

Your Honor, that is absolutely not what happened.

I even said I was happy to try the white collar cases first.

It was the defense's motion for a speedy trial

and Mr. Harkoonian's waiver of his legislative immunity

was what led to the murder cases being done before.

It was the defense that wanted to trial the murder case.

They called questions speedy trial and they said,

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okay, let's do it.

Can you imagine a world in which you either get caught in a lie on national television, or you're just simply so used to arguing whatever side of an issue you need to in the moment that you forget the truth?

You get called out and corrected on the facts and then you turn it around on the other person and blame them for letting you do the thing in the first place.

Like I said earlier, it's like arguing with kids about their bedtimes with these guys.

After this exchange, Judge Newman was like, okay, so I'll give you three bedtime choices and you get to say which one you want.

Dick and Jim chose November 27th for LX Financial Trial.

Then they discussed when to hear motions.

Crane pointed out that Veterans Day was going to be observed on November 10th of this year.

And Ian came Dick with the insults about state employees not wanting to work on Veterans Day and the whining about his wife.

Can I God knows I don't have to work on Veterans Day?

Oh my God.

I know the state government people enjoy these holidays, but we're going to have to rearrange a major personal item to deal with this.

I plan to take Thanksgiving and visit my wife overseas.

That ain't happen now.

I've got to call when I leave here to tell her.

So perhaps we'll have to work on Veterans Day, I'm sorry.

I would say these people actually made work just as hard as they did when you're honest all that.

I just want to point out how stale it is for lawyers to still be making wife jokes in court at this point.

It's 2023, your wife is a lawyer too

and the ambassador of Sylvania Dick.

She's not some stereotype of a battle axe who's always giving you grief about coming home late on pot roast night.

After this, Judge Newman asked Dick and Jim and Creighton if there was anything else to discuss about Ellick.

And then Mark Moore jumped up.

No, anything else we need to talk about in this case?

I said in this case.

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No, you're not in this case, are you?
No, we're coming to you next.
I know, he's charged with him in the other case.
He's charged with what?
My client is charged.
So what do you mean that this is a murder?
He's indicated he's calling the state view murder.
State view, not murder.
Yeah, state view murder in the Satterfield case.
Unless you want to voluntarily join in.
These men really are children.
After Ellick left the room, it was Russell's turn again.
And it was a mess.
And it's a mess we're going to spare you.
Here's what you need to know about this.
Russell was convicted in November of last year,
almost a full year ago.
And he has remained, for all practical purposes, free.
In April, Todd joined Russell's team
and claimed he needed to get caught up on things.
So the judge postponed setting a date for the state trial.
Then in August, they said they needed more time.
So the judge said, fine, we'll talk about this in September.
And here we are in September.
And Todd and Mark are saying that they need more time
because A, they're waiting on the appeal.
B, Russell has been assigned to a Florida prison
and they need to be able to meet with their client
to prepare for the state case.
And C.
I haven't read those transcripts yet.
You have not read those transcripts?
I have not read those transcripts yet.
When is the first time you appeared
at a status conference in this case?
And requested more time.
I've been here at the status conference,
I believe, back in April, Your Honor.
And we've been dealing with the federal case ever since.
And I understand that the federal case is different
from the state case, but I was not aware until today
that we might be talking about client cases as well.
And that's on me, okay?

[Transcript] True Sunlight / TSP #16 - Cory Fleming Sentenced To 20 Years for Stealing Satterfield and Pinckney Money + Alex Murdaugh Has a New Trial Date

And if I have to get ready, I have to get ready.

But I have not read all 30 of those transcripts.

I have not.

I have looked at a couple, but I have not read all 30 of them.

I have not.

You know how some people's last names are their old-timey ancestral occupations, like Smith's and Miller's.

Same goes for Mark, because he always seems to need more time to do his homework.

Also, he always seems to be given more time.

Judge Newman agreed to meet again in six weeks to discuss a trial date because of the sticky issue regarding Russell's federal prison assignment.

And can we talk about that for a second, too?

He wanted to be placed in Jessup, Georgia, where Corey is now headed.

And the federal government was apparently like, what's that, Russell?

You want Florida?

Sure.

And now he can use that to his advantage.

These guys are so messy.

They create chaos, or they invite chaos, and then they cite that chaos as the reason they can't be held accountable just yet, which is why sunlight matters.

Continued sunlight, because we all know what happens in the dark.

Stay tuned, stay pesky, and stay in the sunlight.

True sunlight is created by me, Mandy Matney, co-hosted by journalist Liz Farrell,

and produced by my husband, David Moses.

True sunlight is a Luna shark production.

Right, Luna?