

[Transcript] True Sunlight / TSP #21 - GAME ON... Prosecutors Stand Strong as Alex Murdaugh Seeks New Trial + Was the Colleton County Clerk of Court Set Up?

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I don't know if there's any better feeling than watching Team Murdock get told no by a system that up until recently always seemed to tell them yes.

But seeing the federal government finally step up and say things we all know to be true about Dick and Jim's antics

and what they were really trying to do with their emergency motion to seize LX assets, it is refreshing.

And I hope to see a lot more of it.

My name is Manny Matney.

This is True Sunlight, a podcast exposing crime and corruption previously known as the Murdock Murders podcast.

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

After we published the last episode, David and I hopped on a plane for an action-packed trip to New York City.

We had a lot of great meetings for both the podcast and the book, and I'm excited to share that the future of Luna Shark is looking brighter and better than ever.

And that is because of y'all, so thank you.

To be honest, I never liked New York before I went on this trip, but it hit me in the last few days how much my life has changed in the past few years.

It hit me that I didn't like New York before because it always felt like I did not belong there.

I didn't feel like I was smart enough or good enough to compete in such a big pond.

I have struggled with imposter syndrome my entire life, and while that's something I will never really shake, I felt like I was enough in the Big Apple.

This feeling really hit me when I was touring the Harper Collins offices and signing book plates.

I looked around at the walls dedicated to the greats of literature, and I was thinking, it's really happening, you are enough.

I thought about how long I had dreamed of becoming a publisher author.

I remember how many times I said that out loud, and I remember the looks that people gave me that made me feel like it was a joke.

And again, I want to say thank you for everyone listening who helped me feel like I belong and I am enough to do this.

It means the world to me.

And speaking of the book, we are now in fourth quarter press time with book promotions.

I will be transparent.

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I am wearing many hats right now as CEO of Lunashark as we work to grow our business and as an author,

trying really hard to promote my book so I can achieve my next goal as an independent journalist, wanting to inspire those pesky women out there like me.

I really want to try to get on the New York Times bestsellers list.

I know it's kind of cliché to want something so mainstream,

but it would be an incredible honor as I start talking to journalism schools around the country to be on that list.

As an independent journalist who has gone up against the grain of the system,

the New York Times label would help get my book in the hands of a lot of aspiring journalists.

And that is ultimately the goal there.

So, to my pesky people listening, if you can do anything to help me get to this dream, I would greatly appreciate it.

If you simple things like pre-ordering the book from a variety of places, like Amazon is great, but independent bookstores also help.

You could also request a copy of Blood on their hands for your local library.

And it also just helps by sharing the pre-order link

and spreading the word that my book comes out November 14th

and spreading the word that it will be about so much more than the Murdoch murders.

It's a story of inspiration, heartbreak, institutional sexism, breaking down barriers.

And ultimately, it's a story of a woman finding her voice in a society that still pushes back at that at every turn.

All of that said, I will be the first to admit that with all of this going on,

I have not been wearing my journalism hat nearly as often as I've wanted to recently.

I say that because I don't want anyone out there to think I'm some kind of Wonder Woman doing all of this alone.

I can only wear so many hats because I have a team of amazing people behind me.

Two of those people, who happen to be my husband and best friend, have really stepped up in the last few months.

To David for continuing to push the needle for me every single day,

for doing all of the things I can't handle, for encouraging me to get to the finish line with the book, and for being my number one cheerleader through it all.

And to Liz, I would have quit the whole podcast a long time ago if it wasn't for you and your wit and brilliance.

I'm only able to do a lot of these other things right now because I can trust you to carry the weight of the show.

So we all owe one to Liz.

This episode and so many others just wouldn't be possible without her.

If every woman had a work-wife like Liz, we would have conquered the world a long time ago.

Liz is a main character in my book, obviously.

The first chapter is called Thelma and Louise,

and it's about the early days of her friendship in realizing how much better we were working together.

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I want to read this clip from the book that I really love.

Her presence gave me permission to listen to my instincts in a new way.

Looking back now, I could have never realized how apt that Thelma and Louise comparison would end up being.

While the film starts as a buddy comedy, it quickly turns darker.

Just a short while later, Liz and I would find ourselves deep into an investigation more troubling and dangerous than either of us could ever have imagined.

We'd face gaslighting and misogyny.

We'd battle slander and threats to our personal safety.

We would dive off a metaphorical cliff into an unknown world of corruption, murder and greed, with only each other as our guides.

So that is in the first chapter of my new book, *Blood on Their Hands*, which will be released November 14th.

Liz was on a happy hour with me recently for Luna Shark Premium members,

which by the way, we have a lot of cool exclusive content releasing on pub date November 14th.

Trust me, y'all should sign up for it today.

It's going to be really fun.

In speaking of premium and happy hours, this Thursday, y'all will get a hang out with Eric Bland and I as we chat about the Murdoch murder's lifetime movie, *Absurdity*.

Also, the latest news in the Murdoch world, and we'll talk about my new book, which he obviously is an important character in.

Finally, next Thursday, October 26th, I will be speaking at the College of Charleston.

And the next day, on Friday, October 27th at 4pm, I will be doing an in-person meet and greet at the co-op, Sullivan's Island.

I will be signing some fun koozies and meeting fans over Frosé, and what could be better than that? Follow us on Instagram and Facebook for more live event updates as this next month is going to be action packed.

Stay tuned.

Before we get into it, we have a few fun updates for you.

Let's start with Eric Murdoch's best co-conspirator, Corey Fleming.

After apparently going missing from September 22nd through October 3rd and then resurfacing at a federal prison in Atlanta, Corey has moved once again.

Last Friday, he was transferred to FCI Jessup in Georgia, his first choice prison, which is just over two hours from his family in Buford.

FCI Jessup is a medium-security prison with a low-security satellite adjacent to it.

Corey is in that satellite.

Here's how that has been described by former prisoners there.

Quote,

Great weather, short winters, felt like a college campus, and trees on the yard.

That's from the website of Zocus Consulting Group, which serves as a pre-federal prison sherpa of sorts for the newly convicted.

Other words that former prisoners have used to describe Jessup include bucolic and more relaxed.

No wonder Russell Lafitte wanted to get in there so badly.

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Now, FCI Jessup has had some famous prisoners in the past, including televangelist James Baker, the man who assaulted Ron Paul, and two former council members from a Florida town who ran a scheme involving barbecue sauce. Additionally, the prison is home to Bobby Paul Edwards, potential friend alert guys.

Bobby Paul is a little older than Corey, but also from South Carolina.

He's from Conway, which is near Myrtle Beach, about three hours north of Buford.

In 2019, Bobby Paul was sentenced to 10 years in prison for, and you're going to need to brace yourself for this one, enslaving a person.

That's right, I said 2019.

According to the U.S. Attorney General's Office in South Carolina, between 2009 and 2014, Bobby Paul Edwards, quote,

used violence and other coercive means to compel the victim to work for more than 100 hours a week for no pay at a restaurant managed by him.

You heard that, right? He was a restaurant manager, guys, not even the owner.

The person he enslaved was an African American, Bobby Paul is white, and the person he enslaved was intellectually disabled.

Great, huh? Now, I know what you're thinking. An enslaved person in modern times in South Carolina, that's heavy stuff and must be highly unusual, right?

This is the part where we tell you that in the course of our reporting on the Murdoch story, we learned about the now deceased relative of a man connected to the Murdochs, who apparently has ties to drug traffickers, who also had a, we believe now deceased, intellectually disabled black man, apparently working for his family for no pay.

While we have no reason not to believe this story, we also have not been able to corroborate it yet, which is why we're not using names.

Regardless, it remains one of the most disturbing things we have heard in a case filled with disturbing stories.

So back to Corey, one of his new prison mates is this Bobby Paul Edwards.

And just to give you a taste of what Corey's sentence might have looked like, had Judge Newman not done the right thing and instead deferred to what the federal government was urging him to do, i.e. give Corey a short sentence for that, which would have run concurrently to his short federal sentence.

Bobby Paul Edwards was sentenced to 10 years in November 2019, which by the way, he pleaded guilty to his charge 17 months earlier than that, which is so gross.

His expected release date, according to the Bureau of Prisons, is November 2026.

As you can immediately tell, 2019 through 2026 is not 10 years.

Our next update is about Moselle.

It appears that it is getting flipped, part of it anyway.

The 1700 acre property sold for \$3.9 million just seven months ago.

Now, just the house and 21 acres are back on the market for \$1.95 million.

It's not clear if the kennels come with the estate.

They're not mentioned in the properties listing.

The property is being sold by the same company that brokered the first Moselle deal.

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The Murdochs were accused of using this agency to undersell the property last year. At the time of the original sale and to explain the possible lower price, the receivers were told that the house was worth only \$300,000 and needed a lot of work. We've been asked if this latest sale is a sign that there's some financial end run around the receivership happening and whether it means that the original property was undersold. As far as we can tell right now, this seems to be a classic house flipping situation, much like what was done with the Edisto Beach House. But we are always on the lookout for deals that seem to benefit the Murdoch economy over the victim's interests. Okay, last week we talked about the seemingly coordinated effort that's happening to keep Judge Bentley Price from getting reelected. Judge Price is the judge in the Civil Conspiracy case against Greg Parker, who is the owner of Parker's Kitchen, and the judge in the Satterfield case. We continue to make calls to the South Carolina Bar Association to get information and documentation in support of Price's alleged disqualification. We want to see those letters. We want to know what serious allegations exist against him. The bar continues to ignore us the same way they're ignoring a popular judge whose husband helped her get elected, who has made controversial rulings in favor of defendants in high-profile political corruption cases, bullied reporters, closed courtrooms, who has allowed documents to go unfiled to stay off the public record, and who is on a recording trying to order a deputy to arrest a man who'd committed no crime. We'll be right back. On this week's Cup of Justice, we talked about the fiery surreply that the U.S. Attorney's Office filed in response to Dick and Jim's memo in response to the government's reply to Dick and Jim's emergency motion pleading with the federal government to seize elixed assets from the state receivership. As our co-host Eric Bland said in the episode, it's incredibly rare for a judge to grant a party's motion to file a surreply. Judges are not trying to encourage never-ending arguments. As it was, Dick and Jim asked the judge for permission to exceed their page limit in response to the government's reply. But Judge Gargle granted the surreply, and it was good. And I don't just mean well-written and well-reasoned, which it was. The government finally called out Dick and Jim and finally said the thing we all know to be true about what they were doing by demanding the federal government seize elixed assets. Now, someone on Twitter asked us to explain this to them like they're four years old. I promise you, no four-year-old wants any of this nonsense in their heads. Life is far too fun to know about Alec Murdoch. But we can do a quick and dirty review here. Because Alec and his family seem to be hiding and wasting his assets

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after the murders of Maggie and Paul.
And because Alec even seemed to be doing this from behind bars
after his second and final arrest in October 2021.
The lawyer for Mallory Beach's family, Mark Tinsley,
moved the court to appoint a receivership to Alex and Buster's assets.
The judge granted the motion.
It meant that Alec's assets got frozen and Buster's and Alec's assets
got combed through and accounted for.
Throughout the next two years, Alec would try several times
to undermine the receivership to get at his money.
There were all sorts of tricks which we've covered in previous episodes.
Throughout it all, we learned or should have learned
that there is no bottom for Alec or anyone on team Murdoch.
There is no bottom.
There is no shame.
There is absolutely no code of honor in this case.
One example of this was what happened with the 401k money.
Alec wanted to cash in his retirement account from PMPED
to pay more than \$600,000 to Dick and Jim.
But to do so, he had to go through the receivership.
Once he cashed out his account,
that money technically belonged to the receivership.
But if he didn't cash it out, it still belonged to Alec.
So conundrum, right?
To solve it, they struck a deal.
Alec kept 60% of his money in the receivership, got 40%,
and it's money they otherwise would not have seen.
Then after the trial,
when everyone learned what a murderer Alec is
and what low-down dirty punks his attorneys can be,
team Murdoch came back to the receivership and said,
give us some more of that money that we made a deal over.
The court was like, you've got to be kidding me.
No.
Team Murdoch does not believe in the word no
when spoken to them.
So they found yet another route to hell.
Plead guilty to the federal crimes
and forfeit your assets to the government.
The same government that had already shamefully
advocated for PMPD and Palmutter State Bank
to not only be considered victims in all this,
but to receive massive amounts of money as restitution.

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Alec ran to the federal government's loving arms.
And sure enough, there it was in his plea deal,
an extensive bid about forfeiting around \$10 million
that he doesn't have.
Immediately after Alec pleaded guilty
in a deal that included a provision for the future
in case he wants to appeal his plea deal,
which we all know he will
if he ends up getting away with murder.
His attorneys filed this emergency motion to seize
the \$2 million or so
that the receivership had collected from his assets.
Now, in what world does a criminal want the government
to take his money?
In Alec's cruel world,
where so many criminals powered by their pens
continue to roam free and pull strings for him
even though they want the public to believe
that they are not on his side.
So, as you'll remember,
Team Murdock wanted this money bad.
The best part is they said they wanted it bad
because of the victims.
Remember that line in Dick and Jim's response
about Alec not wanting one more penny of his money
to go to attorneys?
It was so indignant.
Anyway, here's what the federal government came back with.
The defendant knowingly waived his right to object to
and appeal the receivership order,
including the broad grant of authority to the co-receivers
as he acknowledged in his reply.
Yet, that is exactly what the defendant is trying to do here.
The defendant had an opportunity to attack the claims process
and to object to its adequacy and efficacy
at the state court hearing before Judge Hall
on August 25th, 2023.
But the defendant did not do so.
Now, the defendant is attempting to circumvent
and undermine his knowing and voluntary waiver
by effectively pleading this court to hear his appeal
and allow him to contest the order entered by Judge Hall,
approving the process for equitable allocation

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of the receivership assets.

It is axiomatic that one cannot do indirectly
that which he is prohibited from doing directly,
just as the defendant does not get to decide
which assets the government seizes
or when the defendant should not be allowed to conduct
an end run around the state court receivership proceedings.
Boom.

They finally stopped being polite and called out the truth
about what Ellic and his team were trying to do.

Ellic doesn't get to say what's what here.

Up until this very moment,
Ellic had been making a fool out of the federal government.

The U.S. Attorney's Office had allowed itself
to be turned into a spangled baton
and Dick Harputlian was just twirling them
and tossing them into the air while winking at the crowd.

This sir reply was like, no more sir.

Okay, two more fun parts of this sir reply.

Let's talk about footnote number four
because we love footnote number four.

Here is David again.

For the first time in his reply,
the defendant claims that his attorneys do not intend
to seek fees from the receivership assets
during the claims process.

But the defendant and his counsel have not moved
to dismiss their appeal to the South Carolina Court of Appeals,
which seeks to do just that.

Clawback funds from the liquidation
of the defendant's 401K accounts
that he agreed to place and did place
into the receivership estate

for the express purpose of paying his lawyers.

The defendant's counsel previously sought \$160,000
in legal fees from the receivership assets.

To the government's knowledge,
the defendant's counsel have not notified the co-receivers
that they are no longer seeking those funds.

I hope y'all feel what an utter burn that was.

Basically, Emily Limehouse was like,
oh, how noble of you men.

You now say that you aren't seeking any attorney's fees.

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That is so cool of you.
Oh, wait, uh-oh.
Someone told a big fib
because you still seem to be seeking your money
from the receivership.
Did you trick the court by entering into an agreement
because you wanted to get what you could in the moment?
And now you're going to be like psych-interesting.
Well, boys, if you are so noble
as to only want this money for the victims
and not for yourselves,
well, then put it on the table
and tell the co-receivers
you do not want that \$160,000 anymore.
She called them out.
And then she left Judge Gurgle with this.
Here's David again.
This court should not entertain
the defendant's misguided effort
to force the federal government
to interfere with the state court receivership
or frustrate the fiduciary administration thereof.
Amazing, right?
It was a really good day when we read those words.
It felt like we have been in crazy town
and we've been watching our federal government
in South Carolina prove itself
to be the same federal government
that allowed Jeffrey Epstein
to craft his own mini-punishment in Florida.
Money and power should not buy anyone out of accountability,
especially not for heinous crimes
that cost the public dearly
in terms of the harm done,
the investigation hours that get racked up
and the endless hours that prosecutors
have to spend battling these legal fights.
Okay, now for the best part.
On Tuesday, Judge Gurgle filed his order
on Dick and Jim's emergency motion
to have the federal government seize Elix assets.
In whatever shot of fiery magic
Emily took before she wrote her sir reply,

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Judge Gurgle was like, make mine a double.
He came out on that stage like Beyonce and he shined.
Judge Gurgle went from I respect your attorneys
at Elix plea deal to
have you all been eating brain tumors for breakfast?
First, his order was four pages
and he wasn't just like, no.
He was like, uh, no, absolutely not.
In the order, Gurgle immediately sets the stage
by reminding Elix that he is a formally licensed attorney.
And then he characterizes Elix crimes this way.
Here is David.
The conduct leading to the defendant's criminal plea
involved a sophisticated decade long looting
of clients funds obtained in settlements
in wrongful death and severe personal injury cases
orchestrated to feed the defendant's lavish lifestyle
and drug addiction.
Thank you, Judge Gurgle
for calling it what it was looting.
Now, in trying to get Judge Gurgle to order
the federal government to immediately seize Elix assets
Dick and Jim not only mocked the US attorney's office
by likening them to a Herman Melville character
and they not only tried to make it seem
like this was a virtuous cause
meant only to help Elix victims.
They basically accused the co-receivership
as being crooked in the special referee
who was appointed to dole out Elix assets
of being a hungry, hungry hippo for Elix money.
And then Judge Gurgle was like hold my gavel.
This has undoubtedly been a time consuming
and complex undertaking
and has required an extensive dedication of time
by the receivers.
Defendant suggests without specific evidence
that the receivers have engaged in some type of misconduct
or are wasting the assets under their control.
Notably, the defendant has not moved the state court
supervising the receivers for relief
but instead seeks to have this court unilaterally assume
control over the assets in the custody of the state receivers.

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Then there's a footnote.

There is certainly rich irony in the defendant
who engaged in the methodical theft of millions of dollars
in client funds

and then expended the great majority of those funds
for his personal use

to accuse two honorable members of the bar
serving as state receivers of wasting assets.

Snaps all around for Judge Gurgle everyone.

He went there.

Now, the judge gave three reasons why he was denying Dick and Jim's motion.

One, because Elix has no quote, cognizable interest
in the \$2.4 million seized from him

following his theft and dissipation of at least \$9 million in client funds
meaning Elix has no standing here.

Two, and this is our favorite quote,

a criminal defendant has no authority to demand that the attorney general
or any other officer of the United States government
do his bidding regarding the seizure of his stolen funds.

Do his bidding!

Guys, it feels so good to see a judge call this out finally.

Dick and Jim so badly want us to accept their defense of Elix
as honorable and as them just simply doing their jobs.

And this whole time we've been saying go ahead, defend him
but stop the nonsense.

In what world do you have defense attorneys going on national television
to say, yep, our client is a druggie who stole millions from his clients
and then for the next two years do everything in their power
to fight any semblance of justice

and block every bit of accountability coming their clients way.

You told on him from the beginning

and yet here we are still talking about it.

They keep wanting Elix to come off as noble.

He did it, he's admitted to it, but it's a total manipulation.

Instead they're saying he did it and he admitted to it.

Now give us the gavel so we can decide which pillow he lands on.

Okay, the third and final reason Judge Gurgle gave for denying Elix motion.

The federal government doesn't have the authority to take control of money
that was already seized under the authority of a state court.

So that said, everyone should send a thank you to Mark Tinsley today.

His foresight in the fall of 2021 to ask the court to appoint a receivership
not only protected what money they could for the victims

it clearly got under Elix skin and that is win, win, win.

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So we commended the US attorney's office particularly Emily Limehouse for saying what needed to be said and we commend Judge Gurgle for saying enough to the nonsense.

But we have to keep reminding them of this.

If you give Elix Murdoch an inch, then Dick and Jim will demand a mile.

This was all foreseeable and avoidable.

We have enough historical evidence at this point to know that doing a favor for Dick and Jim such as charging Elix federally for the very same crimes the state of South Carolina had already charged him with was going to backfire.

Stop doing solids for these attorneys.

Stop lining their pockets with cash by acquiescing to their demands in the first place.

Be fair, but be fearless.

Stop letting these guys walk all over you

because one demand met will become 30 more demands until the money runs out.

OK, speaking of being fair but fearless,

we need to talk about Elix motion for an evidentiary hearing on his ridiculous jury tampering accusations.

We say ridiculous because even though these are serious allegations from what we can tell so far,

they were purely designed for the hype and the headlines and they've been duly amplified all according to plan.

Dick and Jim essentially wrote the words jury tampering on a stack of boxes that they had filled with blank sheets of paper

and called a press conference just so they could point at the boxes and say it's so bad y'all and everyone responded in kind by saying, oh my God, look at all those boxes.

This must be exactly what they say it is.

Now, we don't yet know what the investigation is specifically finding, but we do know a few things and we've pointed them out in previous episodes.

We know that the AG's office has already told the court that the investigation does not so far corroborate the claims made by the two former jurors that Dick and Jim got affidavits from.

We find it hard to believe that someone who seemed to take their job as seriously as Becky Hill does,

someone who was able to look around corners and have the foresight to plan for this massive event so that it wasn't pure chaos in Walterboro every day for six weeks

would also be someone who would do the things Dick and Jim and these two former jurors accuse her of doing.

We find it interesting that the dismissed egg lady juror apparently had a formal relationship with juror 630,

the only other juror who would sign an affidavit for Dick and Jim and this relationship involves a power differential.

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We find it exasperating that most of Dick and Jim's so-called evidence is like fluff on a dandelion, one puff of air and it floats away and yet it's being represented as solid as steel. We think it's clear that Becky saw something on Facebook that implicated the egg lady juror but that she wasn't savvy enough on social media to screenshot that post immediately or find the post again. And we are annoyed to even have to mention this Facebook post because even though the quote Facebook post represents a good 75% of Dick and Jim's so-called evidence, it matters zero, zero because again, the Facebook post is not the reason this egg lady juror was dismissed. Dick and Jim want you to believe it is so they can then point to Becky and say, she tricked the court. She didn't. She reported a thing and that thing turned out not to be substantially hidden so the judge didn't consider it. Okay. If you haven't put it together by now, we fully believe that Collettin County Clerk of Court, Becky Hill was set up. And we will be right back. We believe that is ultimately what is at the heart of all of this. And we hope that sled and Becky's attorneys are asking the right questions here. From our vantage point, the right questions are these. Did anyone encourage Becky to write her book and to write her book that fast? Did anyone, especially from Team Murdoch, encourage Becky to interview with Fox Nation? In other words, did anyone nudge Becky into the spotlight only so she could later be accused of seeking that attention? Another question. How did the egg lady juror come to be represented by an attorney so quickly? Did she seek out that attorney or did an attorney seek her out? Does the egg lady juror or juror 630 or anyone else who might be making claims about Becky Hill, do they have any connections to the Murdochs or any of the Murdochs associates, including one's elic and his brother, might have mentioned by name to the jury for some unknown reason? Does any of what these former jurors say Becky said sound like something else? Perhaps like things that were actually said by the prosecutor or the judge. No offense to sled or the AG's office,

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but we certainly don't take it for granted that everyone sees things the same way we do after years of hearing the stories of what kind of tricks get pulled when certain people are looking to get out of trouble.

On Tuesday, the South Carolina Court of Appeals ruled in favor of Dick and Jim's motion to hold their original appeal in abeyance until they could get a hearing in the circuit court to consider new evidence in Elix bid for a new trial.

That evidence, of course, is the so-called evidence we already spoke about.

We firmly believe that the South Carolina Attorney General's office needs to stand at their ground when it comes to these jury tampering claims.

We believe that these allegations need to be fully investigated.

We also believe that Elix has the right to have his claims heard, but we do not think that the prosecution should concede points to Dick and Jim just for the sake of appearing fair.

Of course, there's an argument to be made to letting Dick go off because he will inevitably whip himself into an unsensical froth.

Let's all recall his fabulous tantrum when he accused the state of rushing Elix murder trial only to be reminded that it was he who had requested the speedy trial.

Dick sputtered then recovered and basically responded with, well, the prosecution shouldn't have let me get my way.

They need to be questioned and pushed and directly called out on the weakness of evidence they have presented.

They need to be called out when they make wild allegations in the courtroom without a single shred of evidence to support those allegations.

We already know they are going to attack Sled's investigation.

They've already told us that.

So we say, fight back.

We'll be right back.

Okay, the appellate court's ruling was a foregone conclusion.

They really had no choice but to allow Elix to be heard.

We've seen a lot of panic out there from people believing that this might be a sign that Elix is going to get that new trial.

It's not.

It's a sign that our justice system is making a fair decision.

If a defendant says he was convicted

because of jury tampering, then let's give him an opportunity to show proof of that.

But also, let's talk about how this is a slippery slope.

What defendant out there who has been convicted of a crime that they'd hoped to get away with is not going to explore this route once it's been cleared for them by Dick and Jim?

That's why we need the AG's office and the court to stand strong

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and explicitly call out why the evidence is weak
and be brave about what they say and how they say it.
Be like Judge Gurgle's footnote on this because you know what?
There is rich irony in Elix Murdoch claiming a jury has been tampered with
because as Mark Tinsley testified in an in-camera hearing
during Elix's murder trial, the idea that the Hampton County jury
could be messed with by Elix in the beach case
was real enough that Mark held out Maggie and Paul
as possible defendants in a future complaint related to the boat crash
that he would file in another county if he got any word
that Elix was messing with that jury.
Also, those of you who have been following this story for a while
will remember Grandpa Buster Murdoch's bootlegging trial
and the accusations of jury tampering that came with it.
When he was solicitor, he had to briefly step down to face federal charges.
After a jury acquitted him came claims of jury tampering,
allegedly done by his cousin who is named Elix Murdoch.
Here's David reading from an article in the December 6, 1957 issue
of the Columbia Record titled,
Orangeburg Man acquitted of Colleton Jury Charge.
Elix Murdoch and Orangeburg salesman was found innocent
in U.S. District Court here yesterday of tampering in connection
with the 1956 Colleton County Liquor conspiracy case.
Chief government witness in the trial was A.R. Goodwin of Florence,
a member of the jury panel subpoenaed for the Colleton case trial
held at Charleston in August 1956.
Goodwin testified that Murdoch mentioned the Colleton trial to him
in a conversation at a Florence restaurant
prior to the opening of the conspiracy case.
Goodwin told the court yesterday that he met Murdoch
in response to a telephone call made to him by Murdoch.
In the course of the conversation, Murdoch told him,
they are trying to persecute him.
The reference was to the former solicitor of the 14th Judicial Circuit,
Randolph Murdoch, a cousin of Elix and one of the numerous defendants
in the Liquor conspiracy case.
Randolph Murdoch was acquitted.
17 other persons, however, including former Colleton County Sheriff
D. Haskell Thompson, were convicted.
Obviously, Old Buster got his job back as solicitor in short order after this.
So let's go back to that slippery slope we're talking about.
A few things have gotten conflated since Dick and Jim's accusations against Becky Hill.
One is this idea that she saw herself as a member of the jury.

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As evidence of this, they are using a sentence from her book that doesn't at all hold the meaning that they say it does.

To punctuate this, they have used the fourth episode of Fox Nation's Murdoch Special, in which an interview with Becky that was done in the spring of 2023 was again used but in a way that sort of led viewers to believe that it had been done after the jury tampering accusations came out.

Let's be clear about this.

The second this jury rendered their verdict, and the second they were individually polled by Judge Newman to put on the record that each of them had reached their decision on their own and that they stood by it, they were no longer jurors.

Everything they said after that moment was as a private citizen.

And anything they said to Becky after that would have been as a private citizen.

And any insight she gleaned from them after the fact would be information that she received from private citizens and not jurors.

There is a process in place to protect the jury's decision and hold it in its place.

This is the decision they made at this moment in time and it is solidified.

Jurors don't change their minds.

Private citizens might though.

The 12 people who found Ellen guilty were jurors.

The 12 people who might have spoken to Dick and Jim or who might have spoken to others in the community or watched HBO or Netflix or Fox Nation or who have gone on social media to read people's opinions and their hot takes and their rants about Ellen being wronged.

Those people are not jurors.

They are private citizens.

When they were jurors, they were asked to examine the evidence in front of them and use that to make their decision.

And that is what they did.

For Ellen Murdoch and his defense team to exploit the former jurors and present what amounts to a sloppily done after-actions report, a post-mortem, is cheap and it is cheating.

This jury rendered its verdict.

Mere hours after all the evidence had been presented to them, they stood up one by one and told the court that the man in front of them was guilty.

They said he was guilty knowing that he could be sent to prison for life.

And now one of them wants to say that she did this because what?

She wanted to smoke a cigarette?

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A, there is no evidence that we've seen that says Becky ever told the jury that they wouldn't be allowed to smoke until the verdict had been reached. This is a woman who provided Taj mustangs to the media and to the public so that they'd have somewhere to go to the bathroom during the trial. She ruled out the red carpet for the world to be able to access the people's house. She was like Jennifer Lopez in The Wedding Planner. There and ready with cough drops and tampons and jotting down jurors' food allergies so she didn't order them the wrong lunches. This is the woman they want us to believe was like, enjoy your Nick Fitz jerks. Give us a break. And B, what kind of person sends a man to prison for life because she couldn't smoke a cigarette? Not a credible person, that's for sure. Not a person whose words should be taken seriously. So again, when we look at this jury, we need to understand three things. One, the jury existed at a point in time and their opinions matter only at that point in time. Two, they are not only no longer jurors. They have since been exposed to a world of opinions and hot takes on Elec Murdoch's guilt or innocence. Nothing they say now should be considered reflective of what they thought when they rendered their verdicts. They are no longer considering the evidence that was before them in the courtroom. Three, when a former jury is exposed to this kind of post-trial scrutiny, especially from powerhouses ambling down their dirt roads in a diplomat's Mercedes and when the spotlight is being thrust upon them individually, when they're told to lawyer up by the defense team, it affects future juries. Who is going to want to perform their civic duty when they know that their verdicts are not only going to be questioned by the defense later, they're going to be exploited in every way possible. We will say it one more time. Dick and Jim have shown us over and over again that they lie without fear of consequences. They will stomp their feet and act outrage over situations that they cause themselves. They will use any benefit of the doubt, given to them as an invitation to bust open the door of justice entirely. And once they have that door of justice off its hinges, they will throw a grenade to blow up the whole system. Why? Because just about everyone has let them do it thus far. Despite their constant losses and their nonsense being exposed, they will come back to the table as if everything before this didn't happen.

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It is time to bar the door and make them wait outside
until the truth about this alleged jury tampering is determined.
Because now that the appeals court has cleared the way,
it is game on.
And one more thing before we go,
just to leave you with a little more rage in your belly this week,
we have yet another concerning update related to prosecutor David Miller.
Now, we all know David Miller from the Bowen Turner case.
He was the prosecutor who handed the thrice-accused rapist a sweetheart deal of a lifetime.
Had Miller cared more about public safety,
particularly the safety of women in South Carolina,
more than he cares about his future career as a wannabe judge,
I am not sure that we would be in this situation right now.
As the victims of the Bowen Turner case
have to calm their stomachs in preparation for Turner's release from prison next month.
Last week, we told you some news that should be shocking,
but was so on-brand for the South Carolina good ol' boys
who don't care about anyone but themselves.
David Miller, the man who faced international criticism
for doing his job so poorly in the Bowen Turner case,
is in the running to become a judge.
And the good ol' Essie Barr has helped carve his path
by deeming him as qualified, one of many hurdles
he needs to conquer before he becomes judge.
I have seen and heard enough about David Miller
to say that appointing this man with a track record of making bad deals
at the expense of public safety would be a major
and potentially catastrophic move as the justice system here in South Carolina
has already lost a great deal of public faith.
What South Carolina does with its judges,
between appointing them, changing its system for electing them,
and disciplining them properly when they do wrong,
that is what matters the most right now in this pivotal moment going forward.
The corrupt will choose to continue to do the same ol' same ol'.
They will continue to gaslight the public and tell them that the system works,
even after there is clear evidence that shows the contrary.
The corrupt will continue to push and protect the system that only helps them.
But the good news is that the people can choose to take the power away from the corrupt
by voting them out, which is what we plan to do.
And it is our job as journalists to shine the light on the dirty truths
that the corrupt want to be kept in the dark
so that they can continue on business as usual.
So last week, we told you about yet another shocking case

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of a South Carolina defendant getting released early under suspicious circumstances with the help of his defense attorney, who moonlights as a lawmaker, Todd Rutherford. Now, we have had a much-deserved harsh spotlight on Todd Rutherford for months now, specifically after the derogh-priced debacle.

You know, when three elected officials helped get a murderer out of prison 15 years early, suspiciously and suspiciously, right around the time that Alec Murdoch was convicted of murder and the whole world was distracted by that.

So back to Todd, as the post and courier first reported,

17 years ago, 39-year-old Alberto Romero Lopez

was sentenced to 30 years in prison for shooting a man over and over again and kidnapping a woman in an Aiken County home and assaulting deputies.

Lopez was yet another South Carolina defendant who was released early in 2022 with the help of his lawyer-lawmaker defense attorney, Todd Rutherford.

You know, the man who should forever be remembered as the politician who fanboyed over Alec Murdoch after he was convicted of murdering his family and on live television in front of the world.

We see you, Todd, and we will not forget it.

The thing with Todd is that he is just one of ten people, six of them lawmakers, who decides who gets to be a judge in our state.

In the problem, with defense attorneys like Todd holding more voting power than several counties of citizens combined when it comes to deciding who the judges are, what is this corrupt prosecutors?

If you are a corrupt prosecutor with a judge's robe and a gavel on your corrupt vision board, you probably want Todd Rutherford on your good side.

Todd is one of ten people you need to get a yes from to get to your next step.

And imagine if you have the opportunity to get on Todd's good side by just cutting a deal for one of Todd's clients

in a case that you thought would go under the radar.

Think about that.

Do you see how the system we have tilts in the favor of the corrupt?

This brings us back to the Lopez case.

Like the Jarod Price case, we cannot find any substantial evidence showing that Lopez provided any meaningful assistance to authorities, which is what the law requires for early release.

It's yet another case of a convicted criminal with a violent history represented by Todd Rutherford, who got a sweetheart deal of an early release without any evidence of actually helping anyone.

And yet another example of a prosecutor who was willing to help make that happen.

Why would a prosecutor ever agree to that?

Well, guess who the prosecutor was?

David Miller, the guy who was trying to become a judge, the guy who will be screened by Todd Rutherford

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and just a few others in the upcoming months.
The guy who definitely wants Todd Rutherford on his side.
To me, this shows a disturbing pattern
that exposes exactly what is wrong with our system.
This is the second time that we know of,
in which David Miller, while on his quest to become a judge,
has given a lawyer-lawmaker's client a secret sweetheart deal
that appears to be against the public's best interest.
This is the second time that David Miller
appears to have put his own career aspirations
over his duty to serve and protect the public.
And the thing is, the system encourages this behavior.
Imagine if David Miller had to actually run for office
in a general election to fulfill his dream of becoming a judge,
and he was forced to worry about what the people desired,
like equal justice under the law,
as opposed to caring for what a select few in power want from him.
See how he might be motivated more to care about the public
if we had a different system.
See how the Bowen Turner case might have had a different outcome.
Now, the JMSC,
the committee that Todd Rutherford sits on,
will be taking complaints about potential judges
through noon on Monday.
And now is the time.
We need you to be really pesky.
If you are concerned about David Miller becoming a judge,
or if you are concerned about any judicial candidate,
we need you to tell the JMSC.
If you want to help make a difference,
the easiest way would be to email jms at sesinit.gov
or call 803-212-6623.
Your message could be as simple as saying that you do not believe
that David Miller is fit to become a judge
based on his actions in the Turner and Lopez cases.
We will be posting a call to action on our social media accounts
with each JMSC member's specific contact information
so we can ensure that each member hears our concerns.
We want you to be pesky,
but also polite and stick to the facts.
Do not threaten, do not harass.
The facts in these cases about David Miller
should tell the JMSC enough to give them concern.

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If they approve David Miller, like the Essie Bar did,
then we will know exactly who they are,
and it will become more clear than ever
that we will have to change the way judges are elected in our state,
starting with the JMSC.

As dark as the days are, looking at the horrific details
between the Bo and Turner case, the Murdoch cases,
the Stephen Smith case, and the Gerard Price case,
I can only hope that these cases
will propel us to a turning point in South Carolina.
We believe in turning darkness into light.
We could learn from these cases and make our state better
and remind the victims that they did not fight in vain,
or we could choose to be silent
and allow the corrupt to carry on business as usual
and allow more victims to be mistreated
and more people to be hurt by those in power
choosing themselves over everyone else.
Here is to hoping that now is the time for change.
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.
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