**Transcript of Phone Interview with Boston Globe reporter Shelley Murphy**

**on February 20, 2015. (56:40)**

Murphy: Hello

Tainsh: Hi, this is Brittany and Michaela. We had emailed you about an interview about Whitey Bulger.

Murphy: Yep, I’ve been expecting your call. How are you?

Tainsh: We’re good. How are you?

Murphy: Good

Tainsh: We just wanted to know if we have permission to record this call so that we can type up a transcript.

Murphy: Yeah, sure. That’s fine. If there’s anything that you forget feel free to email me if you want to, but that’s fine.

Tainsh: Alright, thank you. Our biggest comment on our website was that we didn’t have enough about his legacy. So, we were wondering if you could fill us in on what you think that was.

Murphy: Sure. Number one, I do want to point out something. I looked this morning again on your website and there are a couple things that are wrong. One of them is, and this goes to legacy, but if you look at the section on the trial, you say that he refused to plead guilty. In fact, it’s the opposite. Whitey wrote letters after his capture, from jail, to various people which we had seen copies of and in those letters he complains that he agreed to plead guilty to everything, that he wanted to plead guilty to everything, and that the government refused to accept his deal because what he wanted to do, he says, is he would plead guilty to everything if they would let his girlfriend, Kathy, go free. And they refused. The reason they refused is they didn’t have to make a deal with him. They had him cold. They had all sorts of evidence against him, and they didn’t need to allow him to dictate terms. They didn’t have to let Kathy go. They had enough on both of them. But the thing about Whitey is he spent his whole life trying to cultivate this myth that he was a good bad guy, that he was a gangster with scruples and principles. He tried cultivate this by doing things in his neighborhood. Around the projects on Thanksgiving he would deliver Turkeys to families, when he was younger. And even as a young hoodlum, he would see little old ladies from the projects trudging up Broadway with their groceries and he would stop. This is when he was in his twenties. He would say, “Oh, Mrs. Moakley, Can I give you a ride?”. He was one of the few people in the projects that had a car, as a young man in his early twenties. And yet he had a car because he was a crook and he was robbing banks and he was doing illegal things. Bute he would use the car to give the little old ladies rides up Broadway. He would be very gallant and let them out and help them up the steps with their groceries. it was all about creating this perception that he was some sort of a good guy, a good bad guy. So when people would sit around the stoops in Southie and talk about Jimmy Bulger, “wasn’t he involved in this or that?”, the old ladies would say, “Oh, he’s a good boy. He always helps me with my groceries.” He also perpetuated this myth that he kept the drugs out of South Boston. He tried to perpetuate this myth of himself as a good gangster, but what we really now know, the truth is that, he was an FBI informant and not only did he not keep the drugs out of Southie, but by his own admission, his lawyers at his trial said he made millions upon millions from drug trafficking. The truth is that, in terms of his legacy, at the trial, his lawyers were intent on proving two things. They wanted to show that he wasn’t an FBI informant, even though there’s no crime against that. They spent much of his trial trying to convince jurors that he wasn’t an FBI informant and that he did not kill any women. The thing that Whitey cared most about is his reputation. He wanted to try to prove that he wasn’t a rat and that he didn’t kill women because good guys, good bad guys, don’t rat on their friends and they don’t kill women. So, he tried to perpetuate one legacy, but we now know it’s something else. When he was sentenced, the judge said, “you are nothing more than a common criminal who was motivated by money. Yes you were smart Mr. Bulger,” she told him, “but it doesn’t take much intelligence to threaten someone with a gun.” That’s what he did. He ruled by brutality and was manipulative. Those closest to him could not believe that he was an FBI informant because they couldn’t believe the FBI would get into bed with someone as vicious as he was.

Arguin: What do you think of when you hear the name Whitey Bulger?

Murphy: Well I’ve spent so many years writing about him. But the thing that comes to mind is, I don’t think Whitey Bulger could happen today. The first word that comes to mind is killer. I think of victims. I think of the trail of victims that he left. I think it’s really important that people not glorify him or glamorize him. There were real victims and there were a lot of families that were destroyed by him and hurt by him. He picked on innocent people. He targeted innocent people. If you had something he wanted, you had a problem. One of the things that I thought, people need to remember that these are real people. It’s not just some Hollywood movie. During the trial, I was there every single day. Some of the victims families were really upset. The sisters of one of the people that were murdered were in the hallway and a young woman came over to them and said, “are you the relatives of a victim?”. They said yes and the woman said “Oh, cool!” like it was cool. It’s like, no, this is real life, and our brother was murdered. I think that it’s important to remember that this is real. The other thing is, people have asked us, “Could this happen today?”. Part of Whitey’s legacy is the taint on the FBI. When his corrupt relationship with the FBI was revealed, it shook people’s confidence in the FBI. When the FBI was hunting for Whitey agents had trouble trying to enlist the help of people who knew him because they didn’t trust them. There were FBI Agents who protected Whitey for years from prosecution. Whitey, early on, when he was preying on other gangsters, and extorting drug dealers and bookmakers, they were afraid of him. But later, when he moved on to extorting legitimate business people, he would warn them, “Hey. If you go to the FBI, I’ll know in five minutes. There was a pattern that if people went to the FBI, to complain about Whitey, suddenly they ended up dead.

Tainsh: The stuff about his money laundering is the stuff that we couldn’t find a lot of information on.

Murphy: It’s not money laundering. Money laundering is different than extortion. Do you mean the extortion?

Tainsh: Probably, we just had a really hard time understanding what any of that even was. We couldn’t find a lot on it. We found a lot about the victims and how the liquor mart was a cover up, but we couldn’t figure out what it was covering.

Murphy: Oh, I get what you’re saying. A lot of the terms in federal court are very confusing, like, “what’s racketeering? what’s extortion?”. But to put it into simple terms, there were a couple of different versions of what happened with the liquor store. Kevin Weeks had one version and Steve Rakes had another version, but the part that is undisputed is that Steve Rakes and his wife bought this old sort of dilapidated gas station and they basically were turning it into a liquor store back in 1984. So, they got all the approvals. They got the permits. They opened up the business. It was only opened up for a very short time. According to Kevin Weeks, Steve Rakes’ sister said, “My brother is having trouble paying the bills and he wants to sell it.” Rakes disputed that, he claimed he never wanted to sell it. But, the part that is undisputed is that Whitey and Kevin Weeks, and Steve Flemmi showed up at his house and they claim that Rakes changed his mind about selling, but Rakes said no he never wanted to sell it. They basically threatened him in front of his little kids. They put his little girl on their lap. They had a gun on the table. They basically terrorized Rakes and said, “you are selling it”. They gave him a bag of like $67,000 and said “Okay, now we own it. It’s ours.” Rakes fled. He was afraid they were gonna kill him. So, what happened is once Whitey took it over, money laundering comes in. Whitey never put it in his own name. The names on the actual property were, I think initially it was one of Whitey’s associates Kevin O’Neil. So basically, Whitey owned it outright, but there was this whole scheme. He was forcing O’Neil to pay him money every month and made it look like it was rent payments. I’ll send you a couple of clips from the trial that might help you. Did you see on the Globe? They lay out how it worked with the payments.

Tainsh: Can you repeat that one more time? I’m sorry.

Murphy: I’m saying I can send you a couple of news stories that sort of lay it out. But money laundering is what Whitey was trying to do to show that he had legitimate income, like when he had the lottery ticket. You know about the winning lottery and how he claimed he won the lottery? In other words, the government can come after you for taxes if you’re unemployed, but you’re buying Mercedes and it’s obvious you’ve got money coming in cause you have all these assets. They try to show that you are doing something illegal because clearly you are getting money. For Whitey, he was trying to show that he had legitimate income. What they’re saying is that he had hidden ownership, that he’s flipping properties and people are paying him money. It’s all a guise to sort of hide his illegal profits. But I’ll send you the clips that’ll spell it out for you. They might make it a little easier for you to understand it. The way the federal law is very different than state law, and maybe this is more that you need to know, but there is no such thing as a murder charge in federal court. They charge you with racketeering, and they claim that, as part of this enterprise that he ran, that he committed all these different acts including murder. Each murder is part of the racketeering. Do you see what I’m saying?

Tainsh: Yeah

Murphy: So in other words, he was doing all of these things as a part of the boss of his criminal enterprise. Those things were extortion, forcing bookmakers to give him some of their profits, forcing bookies that are taking bets. They had to pay him money to operate, same thing with drug dealers. They had to pay him money to operate. If you were selling cocaine in Southie, you had to give Whitey a piece of it. That’s considered extortion. That’s where he was making most of his money. Whitey wasn’t out on the streets selling cocaine, but he was working to bring it into Southie, forcing people to buy it from his network, and then forcing them to give him a percentage of the profits. He was sort of insulated.

Tainsh: So he was still making money off of it.

Murphy: Yeah, that was the thing. For years he claimed that he kept the drugs out of Southie. There were huge cocaine busts back in the early 90s of some of his associates and there were allegations that they paid a percentage to Whitey, but they never had enough evidence to get Whitey. So, when they finally indicted him, and of course he fled, when they caught him, one of the big surprises were that at the trial, his lawyers stood up and said during opening statements that Whitey made millions upon millions on drugs. Everyone just kind of gasped because he always tried to perpetuate that myth that he kept the drugs out. It was a strategy because Whitey knew they had overwhelming evidence against him on the drugs. They had a parade of drug dealers that were ready to testify, “Yeah, I sold drugs. I paid him and he actually forced us to buy from certain people. He was directly involved in importing cocaine and marijuana.” The evidence was so overwhelming. I think it was a strategy because Whitey’s lawyers felt, “Well if he admits that he made money from drugs, then maybe the jury will believe him when he says he didn’t kill the women and he wasn’t an FBI informant.

Tainsh: So they would think he was being honest.

Murphy: Even then, even when he admitted that he sold drugs, they said, “Oh, but he did draw the line at angel-dust and heroin.” As if that made him a good guy. It was only cocaine and pot. But, money laundering is just a way to hide profits. For example, on one of the money laundering counts, Whitey put himself down as an employee at the liquor store. Even though he owned the liquor store, he made it look like he was getting a salary.

Arguin: That makes a lot more sense now.

Murphy: Yeah, it’s hiding it. The whole scheme on the liquor store, initially he had it. Then it was sold. Initially he was the owner that bought it. Then he had someone else’s name on it, but he always actually owned it. At one point he was claiming that he was making payments, when in fact he really already owned it. It’s just to try to cover up where his money was coming from. During the trial, the government said it was conservative, but they estimated that he made about $25,000,000 just from selling drugs and from extortion over the years.

Arguin: In your opinion was James Bulger a leader? And is he one we will always remember? Why or why not?

Murphy: Well I mean Hitler was a leader so, yeah. Whitey was certainly the leader of a gang. When he was with the Winter Hill Gang, they each were sort of equal partners, but he managed to, you mentioned this on your website, when most of the leaders of the Winter Hill Gang were indicted in, I think it was, 1978-79, he and Flemmi were kept out of the indictment because they were FBI informants. Then they went on to do other things. He and Flemmi were partners, but Whitey emerged as the leader of this South Boston based gang. So, yeah, he was a leader. He was the boss. He controlled everything that came in and out of Southie. People were terrified of him. He was very manipulative. People said if he wanted you to like him, you would like him. Usually there was something in it for him. If he was nice to someone, it’s usually because he wanted something. But yeah, he ruled by intimidation and fear. There’s no doubt he was the boss. People were, like I said, they were afraid of him. Everybody knew not to mess with him. The testimony through the various trials was that if he didn’t like someone, he would find a reason to kill them. He didn’t really need much reason either. What would happen is when they killed some of these people, he’s a sociopath, and he would kill these people. Kevin Weeks said he used to get some gratification out of it. He would actually enjoy it, this release. He would be all stressed out before and then he would lie down and take a nap and leave his associates to bury the bodies. They buried three of them in a cellar over in Southie. He definitely was the boss, but what kind of leader? I started to say that people have asked us when we were going out on book tour, Kevin Cullen and I, “Could this happen today? Could there be someone this vicious?” He was able to rise to power. He would either eliminate his rivals by killing them or by leaking information to the FBI that would lead to their prosecution. So he used the FBI to eliminate his rivals. Could that happen today? I don’t think so. I think part of the issue here was that when Whitey was on the streets back in the 70s- 80s, the FBI’s number one, and even up into the 90s, their number one mandate was to take out the mafia. It was a national strategy to eliminate the mafia. This was happening all over the country. What they never did was take into account regional differences. In Boston, the Irish mob was just as bad as the Italian mob. Yet the FBI used Whitey as an informant against the mafia. Whitey didn’t really have that much information about the mafia. They didn’t trust him. He was Irish. He didn’t really have that kind of knowledge about their exploits, but he was very smart because he partnered with Steve Flemmi. Flemmi was Italian. Flemmi was offered membership in the mafia and turned it down. He decided he was better off teaming up with Whitey. So basically, Flemmi was getting information from the mafia and Whitey would get the benefit of that because the two of them would sit down with their FBI handler, John Connolly, and would give him information. They would tell him, “This one’s doing that. This one’s doing this.” They gave them information and helped them do raids of prosecution in the New England Mob. The New England Mob was the Italian Mob. They were decimated. Whitey and Flemmi meanwhile, they’re becoming more powerful because not only is the FBI going after the mafia, but they’re taking a hand-off approach to Bulger and his gang. Then some of them are downright leaking information to them causing murders. Like I said, of the 19 murders in the indictment, three of them were FBI informants and one of them was a potential witness against Whitey. They had agents warner Whitey, “Hey, so and so’s an FBI informant.” and then he would kill them.

Tainsh: So that his information obviously couldn’t reach them.

Murphy: Say that again.

Tainsh: I said, just clarifying, it was so that the information that they had on him couldn’t reach the FBI. Was that why he would kill them?

Murphy: No, for example, as a member of Whitey’s gang or if one of his associates was an informant. For example, the murder of Brian Howard. Brian Howard was a Winter Hill Gang associate. He was facing his own murder indictment in 1982 so he goes to the FBI. He’s trying to cut a deal and he says, “Hey, in order to get myself out of this jam I’m in, I want to give you information about Whitey Bulger. I know that Whitey Bulger was involved in the murder last year of this multi-millionaire business man out in Tulsa, Oklahoma. You read about the world highlight case? Roger Wheeler?

Arguin and Tainsh: Yeah

Murphy: He owned the world highlight company that was involved in legitimate gambling. The Winter Hill Gang was basically scamming, skimming profits or whatever. Basically, they killed Roger Wheeler, the owner of the company, as part of a takeover plan. So, Brian Halloran goes to the FBI and says, “Hey, I can tell you that I have information that Whitey was involved in the murder of Roger Wheeler.” So the FBI agent, John Connolly, then goes to Whitey and says, “Hey, Brian Halloran is cooperating against you.” Then Whitey kills Brian Halloran. That’s what I’m talking about. If he told him someone was cooperating against him they would kill him. There was a Riviera night club owner back in the 70s who was giving information to the FBI about the Winter Hill Gang and same thing. FBI agent goes to Whitey and says, “Hey, you better watch out. Don’t trust this guy, he’s cooperating against you.” So they kill him. If anybody went to the FBI on Whitey, he would find out about it. You guys talked about Steven Rakes with the liquor store. Well Steven Rakes’ father in-law was a Boston police detective and he went to John Connolly and said, “Hey, Whitey’s extorting my niece.” Let me back up for a second. He wasn’t Rakes’ father-in-law. He was Rakes’ wife’s uncle. He was a Boston cop. He goes to the FBI, “You’ve gotta do something about this. Whitey is extorting the store.” Then the FBI tells Whitey. The FBI agent tells Whitey. So Whitey basically says to Rakes, “You better tell your uncle that I know he went to the FBI.” So people were terrified, they knew that he had a pipeline to the FBI. Now they didn’t necessarily know that he was an informant. They just thought he had corrupted FBI agents and that’s what Whitey claims, “I paid them for information.” Of course the FBI’s files indicate Whitey was an informant and gave up all sorts of information on his own gang, people he didn’t like, and on people in the mafia.

Arguin: With the partnership with Flemmi, you mentioned how Flemmi would get all the information, but Whitey took credit for it. Do you think Whitey was more powerful than Flemmi and that he had control over Flemmi?

Murphy: No, I think Whitey and Flemmi were equal partners, but I think that they both made millions and they were both sociopaths. They killed together and they took care of each other. I think that Whitey and Stevie together were a powerful combination. They each had some of their own areas. Everything they did wasn’t together. Flemmi - there were certain parts of the city that he controlled, where the bookies would pay him. Then there were other areas that Whitey controlled. Whitey controlled Southie. Stevie had Rocksberry. But they were involved in a lot of things together. Steve Flemmi didn’t really trust the mafia. He didn’t want to join the mafia. But he and Whitey together, they had each other’s back. They watched each other. And they protected each other. The root of the whole partnership, Flemmi was an informant since 1965. Whitey didn’t become an informant ‘til 1975. Together they became this sort of invincible team. But no, Whitey was not Stevie’s boss. They were equal partners.

Arguin: If they were equal why does Whitey have the legacy and Flemmi isn’t as famous as Whitey?

Murphy: The loyalty of Connolly was to Whitey, not to Flemmi. They grew up in the same housing projects and it goes all the way back to,Whitey his brother Billy was one of the most powerful politicians in the state. You have to go back to like the beginnings of why john connolly protected Whitey and really it started out as a favor to Billy. I mean John Connolly started out in the same housing projects in Southie as the Bulgers. He was much younger than Whitey, John Connolly was, and he was younger than Billy but Billy was a mentor to John Connolly. Billy was about four years older than Connolly but--almost five years older. He would basically, John Connolly worked as a lifeguard with Billy Bulger. Billy Bulger was very disciplined and very scholarly always studying and he used to always say to John, you need to study hard and go to school, education is important. And Connolly said it was Billy that convinced him to join the FBI. It was Billy who convinced him to go to college and so John Connolly felt kind of beholden to Billy. And he saw that by making Whitey an informant he could help Whitey be protected so it really started out according to testimony, at the trials, as a favor to Billy. And so he protected Whitey and then I think John got in very deep, and started leaking information and it got to the point where Whitey really controlled Connolly, not vice versa. But so I mean thats why, it’s that whole story. Cashing in on the fact that basically based on the fact that the FBI was targeting the mafia, Bulger used that to eliminate his rivals and provide information and in return he was getting payoffs to John Connolly and other agents and they were leaking him information that helped him.

Arguin: 20 years from now what do you think people will remember about Whitey?

Murphy: What will they remember… well you know it’s interesting because Southie is so different today, I don’t think really a lot of people over there today knew much about who Whitey was until he was captured, and had the trial and it was sorta back in the news. I think today he is irrelevant over in Southie. He’s part of a really distorted, bad chapter in Boston’s history but he’ll always have his place in that history. I think it’s more of a cautionary tale. His legacy will be as this vicious killer who was able to get away with murder because he manipulated the FBI, and he was able to basically rise to the top of organized crime in the city because he had the FBI in his pocket. So, it’ll be more of a cautionary tale. I think it’s a black, a dark spot in the cities history.

Tainsh: Do you think this helps keep the FBI in line today because of how the public views them?

Murphy: Well no, I think that there were really good FBI agents who were trying to do the right thing all along the way. And they were really good FBI agents who were trying to catch Whitey when he was on the run. But I think that the FBI early on though was trying to keep the relationship quiet, the FBI made a lot of mistakes in terms of handling Whitey. But I think that what also came out of this was there were Congressional hearings, back in 2003, 2002 looking at the FBI’s relationship with Whitey and other informants and there was a whole revision of the justice department guidelines, they put in requirements that there be more oversight, because part of the mistake here, I mean John Connolly, I did numerous interviews with him and he talked about how people complained how you shouldn’t have the hometown agent in charge of the hometown gangster. But he was saying that he was the only one that could have gotten information out of Whitey. But the thing is there was a lack of oversight, they have changed the guidelines to put more oversight in check, but the FBI is always going to need informants, they need informants of terrorists, but I think what it does is put the focus on scrutiny- that there needs to be scrutiny, that there needs to be accountability. There have been other cases since Whitey here in Boston of people that were exposed they were FBI informants and they were suspects in murders, so its not like the FBI stopped having informants. I think that what the Whitey case did do was that it brought more changes in the informant guidelines nationally, and it requires more oversight now. So one agent can’t have that relationship that Connolly had [with Whitey]. Now they need prosecutors, someone outside the FBI overseeing that.

Tainsh: Do you think personally that Whitey killed Deborah Hussey and Debra Davis since he claims to have never killed a women?

Murphy: So well now I think this is the key here, that it goes back to this, is Whitey, he really thinks very highly of himself if you’ve heard any of the letters that he’s written from prison that we’ve quoted from he’s determined to convince people-- it drives him crazy that his relationship with the FBI was exposed because there’s nothing worse in the depths of the Irish psyche than being a rat. You just don’t do it, certainly not in Southie. So it’s very important to him that people believe that he didn’t-- that he was never an informant and that he never killed a women. And that goes with his whole sense of himself because people see him for years and the guy is strangling women and burying them in secret grave, there’s no redemption, how can you look at this guy and say that he has any redeeming value. So it’s very important to him to convince people that that’s not true. The thing is, in the case of Deborah Hussey, the reason the jury convicted him was that there was corroborating evidence. It wasn’t just Flemmi. Flemmi was the only witness on Debra Davis, he was the only one that said I was there and Stevie had every reason to kill Debbie Davis, so the jury would have had to believe just Flemmi, and he was the only other one there that testified at trial saying, yeah he did it. But the thing about Hussey is, you had two witnesses there, not only Flemmi, but you also had Kevin Weeks and Kevin Weeks and Flemmi both testified that Whitey killed Deborah Hussey, and the reason that it’s so-- why I think the jury was convinced- and that it’s so believable is when Kevin Weeks cut his deal, Whitey was still on the run and Kevin cut a deal, he ended up serving only 5 years for being an accessory for 5 murders and he implicated Whitey in a number of those murders and one of those being with Hussey. And the bottom line is he didn’t have to implicate Whitey in the Hussey murder if it wasn’t true. In other words, he didn’t get anything extra by saying Whitey killed Deborah Hussey. He could have said, “Oh he did these four but he didn’t do that one”, because it wouldn’t impact on his deal, at all. So I think that’s what makes Kevin’s testimony so believable, so I think that’s the jury convicted Whitey of that, and I think that there was overwhelming evidence that Whitey did kill Deborah Hussey. I’ve interviewed Kevin Weeks many times and his story has never changed. It’s always been consistent as to what he saw and what he participated in, and I think that the jury thought him credible so he [Whitey] wants to say, uh you can’t take the word of these killers, but these are the people Whitey hung with, these are his guys, and the interesting thing to me is that Kevin Weeks admitted that he still sort of respected Whitey, and he actually loved the guy. He still has some feelings of, he liked him through all the years they were together, and I think it’s not like in giving up Deborah Hussey, Kevin Weeks didn’t get anything special. So that’s why I think the jury found it so credible.

Arguin: Do you think that Whitey killed Debra Davis or did Flemmi do it?

Murphy: Well I think that they were both there and did it together, and the fact that Whitey is adamant that he didn’t kill Hussey, despite the overwhelmingly evidence makes it less credible that he didn’t kill Davis. And they were killed in exactly the same fashion. They were both killed in a house in South Boston, buried in an unmarked grave. I interviewed Whitey’s first girlfriend Teresa Stanley many times.(and by the way you should fix that on the page of your website, the On the Run, that he was with Teresa Stanley on the run for a couple of years, that’s not so, they were only on the run together for a few months, then she said take me home, I don’t want to live like this. But also that photo of them on Alcatraz, that isn’t from when he was on the run that was from an earlier trip, before he was fugitive, so I wouldn’t rely on the Daily Mail, their stuff isn’t really that accurate, and I would know that because I’ve interviewed Stanley and Stanley told me and I’ve done interviews with her many times before she passed away.) But let me tell you this little story, that Teresa told me. She talks about what Whitey did to Cathy. Teresa Stanley was with Whitey since the 60s, he raised her four kids like his own, and she didn’t know that he was cheating on her with Cathy Greig for 19 of the years that they were together, and the way she found out was right before Whitey was indicted, Cathy Greig calls Teresa and says, “Let’s go for a ride, I need to talk to you it’s important.” So she picks Teresa up at her house and takes her to Cathy’s house in Quincy. Meanwhile Whitey finds out that they were meeting and basically Cathy tells Teresa, “I’ve been sleeping with him and he’s been cheating on you all these years and I’m tired of being the other women and I just want it to end. He needs to choose between you or me and that’s why I’m telling you.” Whitey bursts in, and this is according to Teresa, she tells me this story, Whitey bursts in with Kevin Weeks and he started screaming, “C’mon Teresa let’s get out here.” He’s livid that Cathy told Teresa, he’s pissed and Cathy keeps yelling, he keeps saying that “it’s not true, she’s just saying this, it’s over” and she’s yelling, “I’m tired of being the second fiddle, the other one, you need to choose”, and Whitey was in a rage and he started strangling Cathy Greig, he had his hands around her neck and Kevin Weeks said he had to pull him off of her. And Teresa and Kevin weeks both told me that story in interviews. So this idea that Whitey would never hurt a woman, is-- he had his hands around Cathy’s neck and this was the love of his life, who he ends up with later. Teresa told another story too, that he was very controlling, he had a nasty temper, a really nasty temper, and he hated anybody that would cross him. And he was vicious, and in fact, Kevin Cullen and I were working on our book and I got these letters he wrote to a friend he did time with in Alcatraz, and the friend shared these letters with me, and the friend thought that Whitey had a good time with him and he shared these letters to show another side of Whitey. But anyway, in one of the letters when Whitey had found out that this guy had been talking to me, he wrote to him saying that I was a whore and a traitor, because I was from Dorchester. But he was really nasty and vicious, the stuff that he was writing, and Whitey’s got a real violent temper and I don’t think that Whitey has any qualms about hurting a woman, this idea that, oh I would never hurt a woman, is just sheer myth. Teresa talked about how controlling he was and how one time he was really upset with her because she was out with a friend and they were drinking wine and he was physically abusive when he found out, he was so angry at her. He was a nasty guy with a nasty temper and just the brutality of some of the murders he committed, the way he killed Buffy Barrett, the way he killed John McIntyre, he was so brutal and so vicious, and they were buried in secret graves so why would he drawn the line at a woman. Why would a guy that vicious draw the line at a woman. And this is a guy that claims he wasn’t and FBI informant and the evidence is overwhelming that he was, so I don’t know why anyone would find Whitey that credible.

Tainsh: Do you think from looking at our website there was anything else that needed to be changed?

Murphy: I just think that picture is a really cool picture of them at Alcatraz, and he did go to Alcatraz when he was on the run with Kathy Greig, there were some reports where someone says a man from this area said he saw him. And Whitey made a few trips to Alcatraz over the years, but that particular photo of him and Teresa was not taken while he was on the run. He didn’t go to Alcatraz with Teresa when they were on the run I don’t believe. I don’t think that photo was taken then. But you can still use the photo and say that he went there. But that one wasn’t one that surfaced while he was on the run. But it’s true that while he was on the run there were loads of reports of him being seen at various places and it was a huge embarrassment for the FBI, that he was on the FBI’s Ten Most Wanted list for years and they couldn’t find him when there was tips of him being seen all over the world. There was lots of criticism about how hard they were really looking to find him and it was absolutely a huge embarrassment to the FBI. They couldn’t find him, they kept upping the reward. So I think it’s fine to say that but tweak it with a few words saying that he was not on the run when he took that photo.

Arguin: Is there anything that you think will put our project over the edge? Is there some information that you know that you feel a lot of other people don’t know?

Murphy: You might want to, I know you are trying to do this digital thing and have a lot of other things that people can see, you should post some of the letters that he wrote. There are letters that are really cool because you get inside his head. Theres a lot where he is saying, oh poor Kathy, how dare the government send her to prison for 8 months because the bottom line is if she cooperated against him, she could get less time. But she was never involved in any of his crimes. She’s another victim of his. She was crazy about the guy. She served time for helping him evade capture. But anyway, he wrote letters saying that he would’ve plead guilty to everything if they let her go. And theres a number of thing in these letters. But there is a criminal case. I wrote about this a couple of months ago. There’s a case, and I think we scanned in the letters into our website so I might be able to dig it out and I’ll send you the link. This is the thing, theres a guy from Southie who was convicted of murder back in 1982, and he is trying to get a new trial, and one of his supporters wrote to Whitey, looking for help asking, what do you know about the murder, and Whitey wrote back, saying this guy didn’t do it but anyways the letters that he wrote had lots of information not just about the guy trying to get a new trial but about a lot of other things. The letters were really interesting and they were put into evidence in the court case that year. So they became public record. Anything that is an exhibit in the court case becomes a public record. So there are a bunch of those letters-- a handful of them. And they’re public, and they’re kind of cool in terms of insight and because they’re public you can use them. You might want to take a look at those and use them for your project. I think you got some of the audio from the trial of him in jail?

Tainsh: We found a few audio clips talking to other people, not of the actual trial.

Murphy: Okay you found the one I was talking about then. The trial unfortunately, federal court as you know, none of that was public, they don’t allow recordings, or anything like that. That’s why the letters are good and you also had other stuff from the trial I saw.

Tainsh: We had a lot of the drawings, a few slideshows with the death certificates of the victims. We used the photos from his apartment in California.

Murphy: In John Connolly’s trial in Miami in 2008 was state court so that trial, I covered that one too, but Dateline was there everyday and they did a big show on it afterwards and I think David Boeri has some of it on his website. But anyways there is video of the actual testimonies that they got of Martorano, Flemmi, people like that. So there is some video of these witnesses. Again I don’t know how much of your project you want to do with video.

Arguin: We have a four minute limit for the media so we have to pick and choose carefully.

Tainsh: Which is very difficult.

Murphy: Well you know it is very hard. I’ve been covering this story for forever and when we were doing our book we were like oh my god what do you put in what do you leave out. It’s just so much and you don’t want it to start reading like a Russian crime novel because there are so many names. Like who, what? Do you name all the victims?

Tainsh: We do. Well we name the 11 he was convicted for and the one the jury couldn’t reach a verdict on. But we didn’t put all 19 that he was originally indicted for.

Murphy: And again I think it came down to the fact that, they're all sort of unsavory characters. And even the witnesses and the think the jury tried hard to, they didn’t want the word of one person. And these guys got incredible deals, thats the other thing, the government in order to finally bring Whitey to justice they had to testify. They had to make deals with hitmen. I mean nobody likes the idea that John Martorano killed 20 people but only served twelve years in prison. And he was out walking around and it was pretty astounding. When you went down there to cover Whitey’s trial you would she Martorano walking down the street, but that is what they had to do to finally get at the corruption. But to me, you talked about legacy and all that, and I do think that it was really important that they caught Whitey and finally brought him back. To me, if he had been allowed to just veer off into the sunset that could have been the worst thing because the city would never know, not just of the victims, but for everybody. It was justice delayed but at least he finally had a day in court. And Whitey in the end he chose not testify he claimed it was because the judge wouldn’t let him present his defense. He wanted to say that he had immunity from prosecution and he could have taken the stand he could’ve gone up there and told his story and he said he was going to. But he decided not to and I think that he was afraid that they would tear him up on cross examination. He’s a control freak and he wouldn’t be able to withstand that I don’t think. You know what else was kind of interesting is when you read about him, he’s just this larger than life figure and I think we all have these stereotypes in our minds. You watch the Godfather and I’ve covered so many mafia trials and organized crime cases and I think what I found sort of astounding was the first time that I heard Whitey’s voice. He doesn’t sound like a tough guy at all.

Tainsh: He sounds like an old grandfather.

Murphy: Yeah, he does, he has a little whine, high pitched nasally. Like Martorano, he has the stereotypical tough guy, but Whitey Bulger he doesn’t sound, maybe that was part of it that he ruled by fear. He might not have looked very intimidating, might not have sounded very intimidating but people knew that if you crossed Whitey you didn’t last very long. But I thought that was interesting to hear his voice. Whitey looked really small in the courtroom, he had this aura about him and when you see him in real life. I’m sure it would have been a lot different to see him in his prime than to see him now. Yeah, I thought it was interesting. Like the guy in the prison said, he’s like an old grandpa now except he killed 11 people at least.

Tainsh: Thank you so much for everything it will help us out a lot.

Murphy: Yes, well good luck on your project. Feel free to shoot me an email if you have any other questions. I’m like, it’s weird. If they ever did a trivia game on Whitey I’ll clean up. Other than that it’s all useless knowledge.

Tainsh: He is a very interesting character.

Murphy: He is. He is. So yeah, he wrote a letter to someone six months ago and he included a copy of the story I wrote and he circled my bi-line and wrote “sworn enemy of the Bulger family”. I was like boy I’m happy he’s behind bars!

Tainsh: Yeah that’s someone you don’t want coming after you!

Murphy: So the thing I’ll send you a story that gives you help on the money laundering because the trial was in 2013. And I’ll send you a link to the letters. Because they’re public you can quote from them and even take them and place them on the website if it fits into the theme that you created.

Tainsh: Thank you so much have a great afternoon.

Murphy: Good luck to you, take care!