

Red: Time is 4:50. Marie Carroll: The place I was working at at the time, we were hiring on. And so, I was like, "I know exactly who I want in here." Though they didn't end up working together, they still had plenty to bond over. Marie Carroll: Just the fact that we've always loved beauty--and I think that's also, at least for me, a reason why I got into it. Because it's . . . You know, the more beautiful I can be, men will like it. And just with our similar stories, I can also see that within her. Katy Vine: When you say that you had a similar background, can you talk about what that means? Marie Carroll: So, I know she had family problems. I don't know to what extent, but I also had family problems. Mainly with my dad. And so, growing up, I would always try to seek males' attention, just to fill that void. She did the same thing, from a lot of the stories that she told me. Erik Maund was born and raised in Austin. When you think of Austin, you might think of Austin City Limits, South by Southwest, Barton Springs. Musicians, hipsters, bachelorette parties. But Erik lived in a different part of Austin. West Lake. It's a little more moneyed than Austin, more manicured. The West Lake school district is separate from Austin's, and the average home value is \$2.1 million. With a population wealthy enough to fund-raise for anything they need, West Lake schools stay insulated from the rest of the state-school funding shortages. For the last school year, the district raised an extra \$2.65 million to pay for teachers and staff. And the public high school looks like a college campus. Their football stadium even has a JumboTron, and the team is a powerhouse. West Lake football coach: This football team--I think you could just do the math--will go down as one of the greatest high school football teams, because of just the sheer production on both sides of the ball. Erik Maund was a student athlete here, too. He played on the golf team and graduated in the early nineties, though his path wasn't entirely smooth. He was seventeen when he got his first DWI. Seven months later, he got his second. He eventually attended St. Edward's University, in Austin, and a car-dealer school in Virginia called NADA Academy. And then he was set to enter the family business. Erik's grandpa, Charles Maund, grew up poor near the Louisiana border, in a town called Hemphill, Texas. He was sixteen years old, pumping gas for a living, when a local banker lent him \$500 to buy a used car. Charles fixed it up and sold the car at a profit. From that first transaction, his life changed forever. At age nineteen, he started selling cars, and when he turned thirty, he moved to Austin and opened his first dealership, Charles Maund Oldsmobile-Cadillac. Wallace Lundgren: And keep in mind, Charles Maund--they called him Lucky. And how he got the dealership, we never figured that out. I called Wallace to talk about what the car-dealership world was like when Charles Maund started out. Katy Vine: Well, who are the prototypical car kings who created the mold that folks like Charles Maund followed? Wallace Lundgren: Well, there was no mold. Charles Maund was the only Cadillac dealer in town, and that's before they had Lexus, or Mercedes, or anything. They had some rich people in town, and you didn't have to be real bright to sell a Cadillac where you're the only guy in town that had them. And rich people only bought Cadillacs. Roy Butler sold Lincolns. Maund sold Cadillacs. I mean, Saddam Hussein could have owned those dealerships and made money. Over the years, Charles Maund climbed his way to the top of the business world. There's this one story we heard a lot, including from Salem one day at the Shithole, about Charlie and three real estate moguls. Salem Joseph: Charlie and Hudson and Padgett and another guy named Dick Matz formed a company, and they called it Three S&M, three sharks and a mullet. Three sharks and a mullet. The real estate guys were the sharks. Salem Joseph: And the mullet

was Charlie, just a car guy. Together, they bought a big ranch in South Texas. They'd fly a plane in and take their friends hunting and fishing. Salem Joseph: And later on, the sharks were getting in trouble in the eighties and the early nineties; the real estate market was closing. So the mullet, Charlie, bought them all out. So the mullet took over the sharks, like in the shark tank. The mullet wins. And Charlie ended up with the big ranch. And that's how it went for Charles Maund. He came from nothing, made the right deals, and found himself swimming with the big sharks. He lived the American rags-to-riches dream. And he built an empire for his family--especially his son Doug, Erik's father, who was positioned to inherit the throne. But it does sound like Charles never completely dropped certain instincts. There's one story that kept coming up, where Charlie and Doug got into a knife fight at the country club. Wallace Lundgren: Oh, this was in probably '95. I mean, that's common knowledge. Everybody knows that. Friends said that Doug never quite developed his father's street smarts. The guys at the Shithole felt that Charlie's descendants weren't truly as scrappy and resourceful as the man who built the empire. Salem Joseph: No one can make it like the old-timers did. Joe Turner: Isn't it true of the whole generation, though? I mean, I think this generation . . . This guy talking to Salem is former federal prosecutor Joe Turner. He's now an Austin defense attorney known for some big cases. He defended Willie Nelson, when the singer got caught at a checkpoint with marijuana, and Matthew McConaughey, when he was arrested after playing bongos, naked, in his house at 2 a.m. Joe Turner: We have spoiled this whole generation. Even the poor kids have iPhones. So I worry about the next generation. I worry about this future of this country, because you had people like Mr. Maund who started businesses, worked hard, and understood what it's like to be poor. Now these new generations have been entitled. They have never missed a meal in their life. They've always had a car given to them. Their parents pay for their phone bill. Everything is taken care of. Joe Joseph: It's called parenting. Joe Turner: But you know what? There's a quote that somebody told me a long time ago that said, "Success is never owned; it is rented, and the rent is due every day." Wallace Lundgren: Well, yeah, if you say the Maund name in Austin in a 7-Eleven, two people say, "I bought a car from him." This is Wallace Lundgren. He's a retired car dealer, and from 1985 to 2012, he ran Wallace Lundgren Chevrolet. Wallace Lundgren Chevrolet ad: Wallace Lundgren Chevrolet in Elgin, an American revolution. Wallace is a dapper, white-haired 78-year-old who is often wearing a suit and running around town, wheeling and dealing from one business deal to another, even when it's a hundred degrees outside. He knows all the bigwigs of the Central Texas car-dealer world: the Hennas, the Coverts, and, of course, the Maunds. Wallace Lundgren: Well, the Maund dealerships were machines. They were well operated, well managed, took good care of their customers. They were pros. I mean, Charles Maund was probably the best car man in Austin. The late Charles Maund founded Charles Maund Oldsmobile-Cadillac in 1957. It would eventually grow into several dealerships under the Maund Automotive Group umbrella. Charles Maund and Wallace were friends. Wallace Lundgren: He was a fun guy. Not the kind of fun you brag about, but we drank lots of whiskey, and we really had a good time. You know? Well, we didn't kill anybody. My producer, Ana, and I first got in touch with Wallace to talk about the Austin car dealership world. We hoped he might give us some context for Erik's mindset in March 2020. Wallace Lundgren: Just a typical rich kid that never had . . . Here's what we used to say. Here's a guy who was born on third base and thought he hit a triple. At

the time we were talking, Erik was behind bars, and we were having some trouble finding sources who were willing to go on the record. Erik was at the center of the rumor mill at the country club, but the Maunds were a powerful name in Austin. Despite what people thought about the whole thing, speaking about the family in this moment wasn't something anyone wanted to do. But Wallace was willing to talk, and, as we formed a relationship over the phone, it became clear that he knew a lot about what Erik was doing behind bars . . . who he was keeping in touch with, what card games he was playing, what books he was reading. Wallace Lundgren: It does say something for his intellectual capacity that he's requesting books. And these aren't pornographic books. These are real books, of different things. We had to ask at some point: How do you know all this? Wallace Lundgren: Well, please excuse my language. There's a group of people, and their place of business is behind the gas station, and it's called the Shithole. The Shithole. Basically a man cave for a certain set of Austin's aging movers and shakers. Business owners. Gamblers. Car dealers. Wallace Lundgren: Of course, I've known them fifty years. They, they're pretty much all too tired to break the law anymore. Wallace said the Shithole is where he picked up all of this gossip about Erik Maund. It's owned by a man named Salem Joseph. Salem Joseph: Salem Joseph, head motherf---er in charge of the Shithole. And late last year, Salem invited us to come check it out. Salem Joseph: Oh, wait a minute, look at these girls. Holy--Are y'all lost? Is there a beauty contest in town? Look at these girls. The Shithole is in the back of a mechanic shop in Central Austin. Ana and I wondered if a couple of reporters would rattle the group's vibe, but the five or six guys sitting at the round table in buttery leather chairs were friendly enough. They handed us water bottles and offered us Twinkies as we took in the scene. Imagine the pool hall version of the waiting room at your local car dealership. There's a wooden toilet seat hanging on one wall, and a massive widescreen TV playing ESPN mounted over a dripping sink. When we asked to go to the bathroom, everyone screamed, "Noo!" The "idiot," in this instance, was a guy who lived a thousand miles away, who had no idea FBI agents had written his name into their investigation reports. A guy named Erik Maund. And I know it sounds weird, but in order to explain his situation, I have to tell you about a car dealership in Austin, Texas. You know that big, inescapable car dealership that runs a bunch of annoying ads on the radio? The one with the giant American flag, the flapping wind sock people, the sea of sparkling cars? Every city in America has a place like this, and in Austin, it was Charles Maund Toyota. Since 1957, the Maund dealerships sold Cadillacs, Volkswagens, and Toyotas in Central Texas. In recent years, Charles Maund Toyota was one of the top Toyota dealerships in the country. This was a car empire. And there was an expectation that the next generation would take on the family business. So you have to understand: Erik Maund, the grandson of the late Charles Maund, had been born set for life. In the 27 years I've been writing for Texas Monthly, I haven't really covered murders; more often, it's con men. There was the guy who embezzled \$17 million from a small-town fruitcake empire. The brazen pilot down on the Texas coast who crashed cars and downed planes for the insurance money. The Austin DWI attorney who thought he could steal from a Colombian drug cartel. None of these guys were violent. But they did think they were smarter than everyone else, that the rules were flexible. As one guy explained: rules were man-made, and he, too, was a man who could make rules. Erik's not a con man, but it seems like this philosophy would have resonated with him. That would at least begin to explain his

actions in March of 2020, when a stranger blackmailed him, threatening to expose his affair with an escort. Because Erik didn't go to the cops. He didn't pay the money the blackmailer requested. Instead, over the course of two weeks, Erik's life spiraled out of control in a bizarre series of events involving Charlie Sheen's former bodyguard, a wannabe hit man, and a simple surveillance operation that escalated into a disastrous murder-for-hire scheme. And I promise you: this story gets stranger. Erik even left a Google review for the middleman who facilitated the whole thing. It said, quote, "They get the job done in an expedited time. You can talk to 'em, tell 'em, "Don't do this; do that." They got to learn from their own selves. But on Erik—I've known Erik a long time. I never would dream that he would do this. I don't think he really wanted to do it. It was more like it just started, and it just was like a tumbleweed. It just ran with it. And before you knew it, it was over with. After Erik's arrest in December 2021, almost two years passed before he got his day in court. The trial was at a federal courthouse in Nashville, and Ana and I were there. The case involved a woman who was murdered. Her name was Holly Williams. One day, we took a break to meet up with a friend of Holly's named Shawnta Joiner. We met at a public library in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, where she showed me pictures and videos of Holly, a petite brunette with dark, arched brows, long lashes, and straight white teeth. Shawnta scrolled through an endless grid from Holly's thirty-second birthday party, at Dave and Buster's in 2019. Shawnta Joiner: And that's at 11:30 p.m. It tells you the time stamp. And who knows how late we stayed up? I mean, when we would take pictures, this is how many pictures we would take. In the pictures, Holly is smiling, dressed in a unicorn crown and a white bustier. Her dark hair is curled and her makeup is sleek—cheekbones highlighted, eyes glistening with iridescent shadow. Shawnta landed on a video from the night. Holly is sitting next to her boyfriend, Bill Lanway, a tall man with a reddish beard, wearing a gray hoodie. He lights the candles on her double-tiered unicorn cake as the waiter calls for the table's attention. Server: All right, everybody, listen up! That's you over there too. And you over there. It is this beautiful young lady's birthday today. On the count of three: One, two, three . . . let's go! Friends singing at party: "Happy birthday to you; happy birthday to you .." As her friends sing, Holly gets emotional. She puts her hand over her face and giggles—a little embarrassed, but happy. Bill smiles at her. Holly was born in January 1987, in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, a suburb about 35 miles southeast of Nashville. She had an older brother, and eventually, a younger sister and half-brother. Holly's parents divorced when she was a kid, and she went on to live with her dad and stepmom. While friends told us her mom wasn't a big part of the picture as she grew up, we don't have a lot of details about their relationship. We reached out to Holly's family when we were in Nashville, but they didn't want to talk. They're still grieving. Some of Holly's friends wanted to talk, though. Like Matt Garrett, an old friend from Murfreesboro: Matt Garrett: I don't think it was poverty, but very blue-collar. She didn't have money—just like me, just middle-class. She started modeling as a teenager and worked as an amateur model for years, often traveling to cities like Tampa and Atlanta. In one online profile, she listed some gigs from her late teens and early twenties: a poolside shoot, a swimsuit calendar, first place in the Club Drink bikini contest. We talked to another friend of Holly's, Marie Carroll, who was raised in the Nashville music scene. She admired Holly even before she met her. She thought she looked like a Kardashian. Marie Carroll: I do remember we had a photo shoot with the same photographer in town. And so, I remember looking

through the photographer's photos, and I remember seeing her pictures. And I just remember thinking how beautiful she was. I was seventeen at the time, so I'm like, "Oh, I wish I looked like her," even though we were around the same age. Couldn't imagine using anyone else!!" He gave five stars. Usually, the guy with the money gets what he wants. The winds are at his back, and if he finds himself in trouble, a few payoffs to the right people make all of his problems go away. But just once in a while, he's treated like the rest of us: caught and held accountable. And when that happens? The favorable winds turn against him with a force he'd never imagined. I'm Katy Vine, and this is The Problem With Erik, an original podcast created by Texas Monthly and Ana Worrel. This is episode one: "Car Talk." Shawnta Joiner: All the posts on Facebook and stuff, and I'm just like, "Did he really take her dog and just let it go and get ran over?" Chris Cross: You open up the trunk and he had an arsenal. AR-15 ammo, flash-bangs, silenced weapons. Matt Garrett: I've ever had anything like this happen, especially where I felt compelled to call somebody and be like, "Hey, I think you're going to die." But members of Austin's old power circles would recognize Charles Maund's grandson, Erik, on sight: a six-foot-three white guy with short, brown hair capping his boxy head and heavy-lidded eyes tucked under a straight brow. I haven't even opened it. Holly studied at a beauty school in Murfreesboro called the Georgia Career Institute, and in June 2017 she got a certificate in aesthetics. By 2018, she was living in Nashville with her dog, a little white Maltese named Max, and her Facebook bio listed the following: "Medical Aesthetician. Dog Mom. Free Spirit. Music Lover. Nashvillian." The email address he used to message her--cartrash33@gmail--was associated with the pseudonym Erik Moore. Katy Vine (voice-over): It's a clear October afternoon in Raleigh, North Carolina, in 2021. One former employee of Erik's said the Maunds were approached to purchase the Dallas Cowboys before Jerry Jones bought them. To some, he commanded the kind of reverence you'd expect from someone whose surname has been blasted on TV for decades. The walls feature pictures of sports legends and women in tight clothes, but the gas station vibes are elevated bysome modern touches. Charles Maund Toyota was an institution. Katy Vine: Okay