



## Season 2 Episode 8—Protecting Against Fraud and Misuse February 5, 2026

### Jamie Mardis

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### Jamie Mardis

You're live with *On the Heir*, where the airwaves are buzzing with stories of land, legacy, and lineage. I'm your host, Jamie, and today, we're wrapping up Season 2!

Now, today's episode is all about protecting your family land from fraud, misuse, and outside threats—and making sure your legacy stays intact for generations to come.

So, let's jump into the reality of risk. Heirs property is especially vulnerable to exploitation because it often lacks clear title and formal ownership documentation. This creates legal uncertainty, which bad actors can use to their advantage.

In Alabama, and across much of the South, heirs property is one of the leading causes of involuntary land loss for families. Without a clear, court-recognized title, it's difficult to secure loans, qualify for agricultural programs, or protect the property from forced sales.

Some of these risks include:

Partition sales, where one heir sells their interest to an outsider, who can then request a court-ordered sale of the entire property.

Next, we have fraudulent conveyances—these are forged deeds or falsified agreements that transfer ownership without consent.

Then we have undervalued buyouts—lowball offers made to uninformed heirs, resulting in a sale *far* below market value.

Finally on our list, we have tax delinquency seizures—where unpaid property taxes allow the county to auction the land, often for a fraction of its worth.

It's important to remember that scams often start with small, seemingly harmless actions. You may receive unsolicited phone calls, letters, or even visits offering to “help” you with your property.

Common tactics include:

- Offering “fast cash” for your share of the land.
- Presenting documents with vague or misleading language.
- Applying pressure to sign on the dotted line immediately.
- Encouraging one heir to act without notifying the rest of the family.

Awareness is your first line of defense. A strong protection plan starts with three simple steps.

Ownership clarity is the first one—ensure the family understands exactly who owns what.

You want to make sure you are keeping consistent documentation—that means keeping deeds, wills, tax receipts, and meeting notes in an organized, accessible location.

And then finally family communication—We preached about this a lot in the first season, regularly updating heirs on offers, changes in text edits, or other developments is important, and it's key to preserving your land.

Remember, land loss often happens in small steps before it happens all at once. Staying alert to these patterns—and knowing your legal rights—can keep your family's land secure for generations.

### **Jamie Mardis**

Now we're going to switch up a little bit and jump into tools and strategies. Here's how families can stay protected—because when it comes to heirs property, prevention is almost always cheaper, faster, and far less stressful than trying to fix a problem after it starts. Here are a few key steps.

1. Verify Everything. And yes, I do mean everything.

If someone approaches you with an offer to buy, develop, or “help” with your land, slow down and check them out. Scammers—and even some legitimate businesses—often target heirs property because they know ownership can be complicated.

If you're not sure who they are, do your homework: look up their business license, check reviews, and see if they have a legitimate presence online or with the Better Business Bureau.

And remember, "Don't sign anything!" This isn't just a cliché—it's a survival rule. If you don't fully understand a document, take it to someone who does.

## 2. Use the AHPA.

The Alabama Heirs Property Alliance exists for a reason—to connect families with trusted information and the right resources at the right time.

They can help with property records research, family tree development, legal term explanations, and referrals to attorneys who specialize in heirs property cases.

We also host workshops, resource fairs, and webinars to keep you informed. Think of us as your first call when something feels off—or even before it does. The sooner you loop in AHPA, the more options you'll have.

## 3. Formalize Agreements.

Too often, family decisions about land stay verbal—until someone passes away, someone disagrees, or someone tries to sell.

Putting agreements in writing turns those verbal understandings into legal protections. That includes creating or updating wills, drafting powers of attorney, and signing formal family agreements on how the land can be used or sold.

Yes, it may feel uncomfortable at first—but a little paperwork today can prevent years of court battles tomorrow.

## 4. Regularly Check-in.

Again, talk to your family. Families change—people move, get married, pass away, or simply lose touch. The more disconnected your heirs are from each other and from the land, the easier it is for outside forces to wedge their way in.

Make it a habit to keep everyone updated: schedule annual calls, send a group email, or meet at the property once a year. Everyone loves a family reunion, right?

A united family is harder to manipulate or divide.

## 5. Know Your Rights (and this one is super important).

Every state has laws about partition sales, quiet title actions, and property taxes—and Alabama's are no exception.

Understanding those rules before there's a conflict can save your family thousands of dollars and acres of land.

For example, under the Uniform Partition of Heirs Property Act, you may have certain rights to buy out other heirs before the property is sold to outsiders.

And even if you never end up in court, simply knowing these protections exist can shape the decisions you make now.

Bottom line—land loss doesn't just happen overnight. It's usually the result of a series of small moments when the family didn't verify, didn't connect, or simply didn't act.

These tools and strategies aren't just good ideas—they're your line of defense.

### **Jamie Mardis**

This season, we've been on quite a journey together.

We started by clearing up the confusion around joint and mixed ownership—laying the foundation for everything else we've talked about. From there, we explored the power of choosing a family point person, that one steady hand who can keep everyone connected and informed.

We rolled up our sleeves and looked at the practical side of making improvements—whether that's adding a building, running utilities, or fixing what's already there—while keeping your rights and resources intact.

Adam Rabinowitz walked us through what happens when disaster hits—storms, fires, floods—and how recovery is possible when you know your options.

We talked about the difficult moments too, like what to do when the question of selling comes up and not everyone is on the same page.

Looking back over all these conversations, one thing is clear: securing family land isn't just about holding a deed. It's about holding a vision.

Every step you take, every piece of knowledge you share, every agreement you reach—these are the building blocks of a legacy that lasts.

And if this season has shown us anything, it's that families who prepare together, protect together.

Because when you combine knowledge, preparation, and unity... the roots you plant today will stand strong for generations to come.

So, as we close the book on Season 2, remember—every step you've taken with us is one more step toward securing your family's future.

But this isn't the end of the journey. In fact, it's just the next chapter. Let's talk about where we're headed next.

### **Jamie Mardis**

Okay, so here's the exciting part: the work you do now makes a difference. Families who organize, communicate, and plan can preserve their land, strengthen their legacy, and even turn challenges into opportunities.

The AHPA is here to help, and you're not alone. Whether it's technical assistance, connecting with legal or financial experts, or guiding you through tricky decisions, they stand ready to support families like yours.

Remember, every small action—clarifying ownership, paying taxes on time, documenting agreements—adds up to protection for the next generation.

The land is more than property; it's a family story, and your actions write the next chapter.

As we wrap up season two of *On the Heir*. I want to take a moment to reflect on what we've built together over these episodes.

### **Jamie Mardis**

This season, we've heard from voices that challenge us to think, grow together as a family and make those tough decisions together. So, although this is goodbye for now, we'll be back with season three with more of the heirs property education and tips that you absolutely love.

### **Jamie Mardis**

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### **Jamie Mardis**

Thanks for tuning in *On the Heir*. Be sure to subscribe. Leave a review and share your thoughts with this. Together we'll continue exploring the fascinating world of heirs property. One episode at a time. Until next time, keep your land secure, your family and farm and your legacy strong. See y'all in season three.