

9TH UNPLUGGED

STEPHANIE YEPEZ

JURY SERVICES

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HOSTED BY: HONORABLE ALICIA L. LATIMORE

JUDGE LATIMORE: Hi, I'm Judge Latimore.

MS. YEPEZ: Hi, I'm Stephanie Yepez.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And you're listening to 9th Unplugged.

(Music)

JUDGE LATIMORE: So before we get unplugged from work, let's talk a little bit about what you do and then we'll dive into everything else. How about that?

MS. YEPEZ: Okay.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right, so what department do you work in and what are your duties?

MS. YEPEZ: I work for jury services.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And what do you do in jury services?

MS. YEPEZ: So we check in people, the civilians, and let them know the process of what to expect in jury. We work with the judges. We do emails, call-ins.

JUDGE LATIMORE: How long have you been doing that?

MS. YEPEZ: It's going to be a year November.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, okay. All right, so you're coming up to an anniversary.

MS. YEPEZ: Yes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right, do you enjoy meeting lots of people?

MS. YEPEZ: Yes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right. Do you have any favorite stories that you can tell us about working in jury services?

MS. YEPEZ: Um, there's some interesting excuses. People are trying to get excused –

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, share some with our audience.

MS. YEPEZ: Well, I had a resident that came, I guess she got her tooth taken out and she came inside with her tooth and showed me.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, she wanted –

MS. YEPEZ: And I said –

JUDGE LATIMORE: Evidence.

MS. YEPEZ: She wanted to be excused, yeah. And I told her ma'am, you could have just called or had a medical excuse.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Well, she wanted to make sure that she provided you with proof. Well, we appreciate her doing that to make sure that we wouldn't have suggested that she wouldn't make anything up about the tooth, right.

MS. YEPEZ: Yeah.

JUDGE LATIMORE: So let's go ahead and get unplugged. What do you do when you leave work and you're done with jury services?

MS. YEPEZ: I have an eight-year-old son.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, nice.

MS. YEPEZ: And so I spend time with him. After hours, you know, make dinner, enjoy time reading, watching TV with him.

JUDGE LATIMORE: What do you all do for fun?

MS. YEPEZ: He loves going to hotels. He loves traveling just like me, amusement parks, the parks.

JUDGE LATIMORE: What is your favorite place to travel? Where do you like to go?

MS. YEPEZ: Well, so far I've been to the Bahamas which I love. It's beautiful. Actually having travel coming up. I'm going to Europe.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Nice.

MS. YEPEZ: I'm going to Spain and I'm obsessed with Paris. I'm going to Paris. I'm super excited.

JUDGE LATIMORE: That sounds like an exciting trip to take. And your son is going to go with you?

MS. YEPEZ: Not this time but next time, yes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right, because you owe him one now since you get to go to Europe and you're going to leave him.

MS. YEPEZ: Yeah.

JUDGE LATIMORE: So what was your first job before you got into jury services? What did you start out doing?

MS. YEPEZ: Well, I worked at the movie theater as a theater manager. And then after that, I was at the State Attorney's Office as a victim advocate.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And how was that experience?

MS. YEPEZ: Amazing. I got to go to trial, go to depositions, work with the attorneys.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And can you explain to the audience what a victim advocate does?

MS. YEPEZ: Yes, a victim advocate is those victims that have been traumatized through the crime that they've been in. So I worked in all departments, domestic violence, homicide cases, general felony cases, all that.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right. That's a wonderful job to have.

MS. YEPEZ: Um-hum, it's a blessing to help the community, especially victims that are traumatized.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Now, I understand that you like to talk about criminal justice topics.

MS. YEPEZ: Um-hum.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Is the law something that you wanted to be involved in all along?

MS. YEPEZ: Yes, I've always loved the suspense movies. I love the reality shows, like COPS, 48 Hours, like all that. I've always been interested in like what's going to happen to that person or what's going on with this – if it's a movie, like what's going to end? What's the ending going to be like? Just justice.

JUDGE LATIMORE: That's good.

MS. YEPEZ: Yeah, just having like justice for that person.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And what's your favorite show?

MS. YEPEZ: Reality shows, or any show?

JUDGE LATIMORE: Any show.

MS. YEPEZ: I love Jersey Shore but I'm from New Jersey, that's why.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, Jersey girl, yep.

MS. YEPEZ: Yeah. For crime, 48 Hours.

JUDGE LATIMORE: 48 Hours.

MS. YEPEZ: It's suspenseful, yes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right. That sounds good. I used to watch that a lot. I haven't done that lately. Just living it in real life kind of, so I don't watch it as much as I used to but that's one of your favorites.

MS. YEPEZ: Um-hum.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay, tell me, do you have a pet peeve?

MS. YEPEZ: Not really. I'm really friendly and I don't really like have a pet peeve towards something or anything like that, or that bothers me or anything like that.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Is there something you'd never do again?

MS. YEPEZ: Oh, that's a good one. What would I never do again?

JUDGE LATIMORE: Any experience that you've had you don't want to do that again.

MS. YEPEZ: I'm scared of heights so I would never go – I went on a Universal ride and it was like those – I think those tower things that drop you, I would never do that again.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Never do that one, no, not at all.

MS. YEPEZ: Yeah, I'm scared of heights.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Even in elevators, like tall buildings going up elevators, does that scare you as well?

MS. YEPEZ: Well, if I can't see anything it won't. But if it's like a glass one, yes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: When did you discover that you were afraid of heights?

MS. YEPEZ: Since I was a little girl.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, so always been that way.

MS. YEPEZ: Yeah. I was so scared of roller coasters, right now – I still go on it. I still get nervous, but I still go on roller coasters.

JUDGE LATIMORE: With your son, he'll go with you?

MS. YEPEZ: He doesn't like it. He's like me, he's like mom – he came out – he hates roller coasters.

JUDGE LATIMORE: What are some small things that make your day go better?

MS. YEPEZ: Making somebody's day, especially helping – especially in jury, like making somebody's day an easy process. A lot of jurors are nervous. They have never been in that situation, becoming a juror so just making it easier for them to understand the process.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Now, I understand you decorate parties. You enjoy doing that.

MS. YEPEZ: Yes. I do. I love doing like the balloons, arches. I love surprising people too. Like setting up birthdays and stuff.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And do you have themes for your parties? Is that part of how you're decorating?

MS. YEPEZ: It all depends on the person, what theme they would like. But if I'm doing a surprise, I just go with something that I know they like.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Do you have a favorite food?

MS. YEPEZ: Yes, I love Italian food and sushi.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Do you eat raw sushi?

MS. YEPEZ: No. Has to be cooked.

JUDGE LATIMORE: I'm in that group as well. And what's your favorite Italian food that you like?

MS. YEPEZ: Pasta.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay. And is there a restaurant that you would suggest in the Orlando area –

MS. YEPEZ: Maggiano's.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Maggiano's. It's a winner everywhere.

MS. YEPEZ: Oh, it's so good.

JUDGE LATIMORE: It absolutely is.

MS. YEPEZ: Yes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right, if there was a small gesture that you could do for a stranger, what would that be that you thought would make them happy?

MS. YEPEZ: Like just being, like if they need someone to like listen to them, being there for them if they need someone to talk to. One gesture is like helping like the homeless, I 've done that before. Again, I was a victim advocate so I'm very compassionate towards others and being there for them.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And are there any personal rules that you never break?

MS. YEPEZ: Not really, no rules.

JUDGE LATIMORE: No rules, right. You're rules free.

MS. YEPEZ: Try not to break the rules.

JUDGE LATIMORE: That's one of the rules that you never break. Don't break the rules, right?

MS. YEPEZ: Yes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right, that sounds good. And so what is your future goal? For example, if you had a goal within the next five years, what would that be?

MS. YEPEZ: Well, I did love the victim advocacy process. I do love being in jury services cause it was a like a background of what they do before a trial, but I actually would like to back to that and maybe potentially be a victim specialist for the FBI, try to work my way there.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Because you watch a lot of those crime shows as well so you might as well get engaged in that. Is there anyone in your family that's in law enforcement?

MS. YEPEZ: No, I'm the only one that like's criminal justice in my family.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Is there anything in life that you've done that you regret?

MS. YEPEZ: No, I don't. I think things happen for a reason in life.

JUDGE LATIMORE: That's always good. So you've enjoyed your experience thus far and looking to build upon it.

MS. YEPEZ: Yes, correct.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Sounds good. And what is the best thing about you that you would share with people?

MS. YEPEZ: I'm very again, friendly, outgoing, I love to help others, yeah.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Well, I'm sure it will be a pleasure for everyone to be able to work with you. You seem like the perfect person to be able to have a future friendship with.

MS. YEPEZ: I like to make people smile.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Thank you for being unplugged with me.

MS. YEPEZ: Thank you for having me.

(Music)