

9<sup>TH</sup> UNPLUGGED

DALIA ROMERO

COURT INTERPRETER

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HOSTED BY: HONORABLE ALICIA L. LATIMORE

JUDGE LATIMORE: Hi, I'm Judge Latimore.

MS. ROMERO: Hi, I'm Dalia Romero.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And you're listening to 9<sup>th</sup> Unplugged.

(Music)

JUDGE LATIMORE: So thank you for joining me today. Before we get started and get unplugged, could you tell me, the community, or our listeners what is your position with the Ninth Circuit?

MS. ROMERO: I am one of the interpreters in the interpreter's department.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And can you describe what your job entails day-to-day?

MS. ROMERO: My job, this time I am the bridge between the judge and the defendants.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

MS. ROMERO: Or the witnesses. I am the interpreter for them.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And which languages do you speak?

MS. ROMERO: I speak Spanish and English.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Is there a language that you wish you could speak other than Spanish and English?

MS. ROMERO: Yes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: What's that?

MS. ROMERO: Creole.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay. Well, you stay around and keep learning, right?

MS. ROMERO: Yes, definitely.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Do you know how to speak any Creole?

MS. ROMERO: No. I can pick up some words, and conversations.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

MS. ROMERO: So but no, I do not speak Creole.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right. Well, let's get unplugged. When you're not translating in court or interpreting in court, what do you do for fun?

MS. ROMERO: Well, I enjoy being with my family and anything that I do with my family I enjoy. I have one son, and he's the outdoor person guy. So I have some fun listening to his stories a lot, but I love to visit national parks.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Nice, which one is your favorite?

MS. ROMERO: I've been out to Joshua Tree.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

MS. ROMERO: Out in California.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

MS. ROMERO: And my son is a rock climber. So it was mixed feelings, exciting and scary.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Scary at the same time.

MS. ROMERO: Yes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: You climb rocks as well.

MS. ROMERO: No, I do not.

JUDGE LATIMORE: What is your hidden talent?

MS. ROMERO: I am a great cook.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Nice. And what is your most popular dish amongst the family?

MS. ROMERO: Amongst the family and friends, are beans.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Beans.

MS. ROMERO: Yes, my co-workers love my beans.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, nice. And did you learn that just by sticking around the kitchen and watching mom or how did you learn how to be such a great cook?

MS. ROMERO: Watching mom a lot and I do – I enjoy food and eating and cooking, so I – I have watched my mom from – she let us start cooking at nine, make the rice.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right.

MS. ROMERO: The beans, I have my own recipe.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Your specialty.

MS. ROMERO: Yes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay. In addition, where did you grow up?

MS. ROMERO: I grew up, I've been here in Florida since I was 13, 42 years.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Nice.

MS. ROMERO: So mom and dad decided to move to the mainland from Puerto Rico.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Puerto Rico.

MS. ROMERO: Yes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay. And do you visit Puerto Rico?

MS. ROMERO: Yes, I visited Puerto Rico in the last few years. It was mostly –

JUDGE LATIMORE: Still have family there?

MS. ROMERO: Yes, I do have family there. Mostly it was work related.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay. All right. And what is the most that you miss about Puerto Rico? What is it that you miss the most?

MS. ROMERO: The – my father comes from the central part of Puerto Rico, which is Aibonito. It's a very small town and I love the mountains and everything is so green. I enjoy that.

JUDGE LATIMORE: That sounds like a nice place. What gives your life meaning?

MS. ROMERO: I would have to say I am very thankful for all the blessings, for everything in my life. My parents are here with me. And my son is my pride and joy.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yes, and may I ask, how old is your son now?

MS. ROMERO: My son is 33.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Still hanging out with your son?

MS. ROMERO: No, actually he decided to move to California eight years ago.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, okay.

MS. ROMERO: Before he moved, he actually came to me and told me, mom, I applied for a job in California and I said you've never been to California, why would you move? And he's like, well, I have to – I can't be a mama's boy my whole life and I said –

JUDGE LATIMORE: And you said why not.

MS. ROMERO: I said no one needs to know.

JUDGE LATIMORE: It will be our secret.

MS. ROMERO: It will be our secret. But I thank God that he made that move because he's grown as a man. I'm so proud of him and he's getting married in October.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Now, you're going to have a son and a daughter.

MS. ROMERO: Yes. And he has found a lovely young lady and they're getting married in Yosemite National Park, October 2<sup>nd</sup>.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, that is nice. Well, congratulations.

MS. ROMERO: Thank you.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Congratulations on that. What is the best thing that happened to you last week?

MS. ROMERO: Last week I have to say, I got to go away for the weekend.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

MS. ROMERO: Even though we were supposed to have a beach weekend and I was going with my sister and her husband, it rained the whole time. But I did get to drive down to Lido Beach, all the way down the coast and I enjoyed the travel and the –

JUDGE LATIMORE: Beautiful scenery.

MS. ROMERO: It rained on Saturday. Sunday was a sunny day. It was beautiful so it was exciting. I do love the ocean and I used to be a beach buddy many years ago. I would be at the beach two or three times a week.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay. Nice, yes. You really enjoy that.

MS. ROMERO: Yes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: So Florida is the right place for you too.

MS. ROMERO: Definitely.

JUDGE LATIMORE: What type of music do you listen to when you're travelling in your car?

MS. ROMERO: I am normally listening to Spanish music. Some salsa, Merengue, even though I am not a good dancer.

JUDGE LATIMORE: I was about to ask you that question next. So you cut me off right there. You're like don't even go there, right.

MS. ROMERO: No, not a good dancer.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Have you ever skydived?

MS. ROMERO: No.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Would you?

MS. ROMERO: No.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Why not?

MS. ROMERO: I am afraid of heights, believe it or not.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Are you.

MS. ROMERO: Yes. With my son the climber, I am terrified of heights.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Well, I always say why jump out of a perfectly good plane, so I would never skydive.

MS. ROMERO: No, no, no.

JUDGE LATIMORE: What is your favorite – who is your favorite movie star?

MS. ROMERO: Geez. I actually – believe it or not I love westerns.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Do you?

MS. ROMERO: Yes. I love Clint Eastwood.

JUDGE LATIMORE: There you go. He's a great actor and a great writer.

MS. ROMERO: Oh, yes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And a great producer.

MS. ROMERO: And I have seen –

JUDGE LATIMORE: He's great all around, pretty much, isn't he?

MS. ROMERO: Yes, and I watch his movies, even the ones that were in Italian.



JUDGE LATIMORE: Really.

MS. ROMERO: They were recorded in Italian.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Do you have a favorite one?

MS. ROMERO: The Good, The Bad and The Ugly.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Absolutely. Yeah, that –

MS. ROMERO: Or Two Mules for Sister Sara, something like that.

JUDGE LATIMORE: I have no doubt you like Clint Eastwood, okay. You have gotten me convinced. Now, if you had to pick, which one would you pick, small groups or big crowds?

MS. ROMERO: Small groups.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Meat or vegetables?

MS. ROMERO: Meat.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Apple or Android?

MS. ROMERO: Apple.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Seafood or steak?

MS. ROMERO: Seafood.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Early morning or late night?

MS. ROMERO: Early morning.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All these early morning people. I've always – I guess I'm the only one that's sleeping in. Name someone you'd love to talk to over coffee or a drink.

MS. ROMERO: I would have to say Joe Biden.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Nice. Why is that? Tell me why that is.

MS. ROMERO: I think he's an amazing person. And I believe a lot of experiences I would learn from him in many areas.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Now, would you want – does it matter where it occurs or did you want that to be in the White House, or does it really matter?

MS. ROMERO: Random.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Random.

MS. ROMERO: I would rather – yes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Just like walk up on him –

MS. ROMERO: Yes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: -- at an ice cream shop, maybe.

MS. ROMERO: Definitely.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Because I think he hangs out there at those –

MS. ROMERO: I would enjoy that.

JUDGE LATIMORE: That's nice. That is nice. What was your very first job?

MS. ROMERO: Oh, my goodness. My first job was at Dunkin Donuts on International Drive.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Really.

MS. ROMERO: Yes. And I went for a job interview. I was very young. I'm not sure if I was even 14, went with my sister. We had just come from Puerto Rico, just a few months before that. And the owner says, well, I will hire you to my sister, but your sister is very quiet. I don't know – and I could understand him. My English was horrible. And she's not talking, he said to my sister. And my sister said, well, she's okay. And I got hired a few months after that. He would say, Dalia, could you please shut up. And I worked for him until after I was 21 years old. Any time someone didn't show up for a shift, he would call me, hey, can you help us out for a couple of hours or whatever? I did. And I actually enjoyed that. I learned English working at Dunkin Donuts.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Wow, that's a great story. And just goes to the point of never judge a book by its cover.

MS. ROMERO: Definitely.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Thank you so much for being unplugged with me today.

MS. ROMERO: Thank you. It's a pleasure.

(Music)