

9TH UNPLUGGED

PATRICIA BECKTON

JUDICIAL ASSISTANT

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HOSTED BY: HONORABLE ALICIA L. LATIMORE

JUDGE LATIMORE: Hi, I'm Judge Latimore.

MS. BECKTON: Hi, I'm Patricia Beckton.

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

(Music)

JUDGE LATIMORE: Before we get started and get unplugged, tell me something about your position and the department you work in.

MS. BECKTON: Well, I am the judicial assistant for the one and only, number one judge in Orange County, Judge Reginald K. Whitehead.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Well, I can't agree with you on that, okay.

MS. BECKTON: I figured you wouldn't.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And how long have you been his assistant?

MS. BECKTON: Twenty-five years.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And prior to becoming Judge Whitehead's assistant, where were you and what were you doing?

MS. BECKTON: I was actually in traffic court. I was a trial clerk.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, okay. So what was your very first job, Ms. Pat?

MS. BECKTON: My very first job was a store clerk. I was 16 years old in Eatonville.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right. And where you are from? Where were you born and raised?

MS. BECKTON: Born in Orlando, raised in Eatonville, Florida.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay. All right, and what do you remember the most about your first job?

MS. BECKTON: The big cookies, two for a nickel.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, way back when they came in the brown bag, when you get to put them in a brown bag.

MS. BECKTON: Well, they were actually in the jar.

JUDGE LATIMORE: In the jar but you get to put them in the little brown bag.

MS. BECKTON: Yes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: I remember them big cookies. They were so good and the bag would get all greasy on the side.

MS. BECKTON: Yes, they were. Oh, yeah.

JUDGE LATIMORE: With the butter, okay.

MS. BECKTON: Don't take me that far back.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Don't take you that far back.

MS. BECKTON: You're tempting me to go get some cookies now.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right, and what was the worst job you've ever had?

MS. BECKTON: I really haven't had a worst job. Oh, I know, I was working at a testing lab and we had to do microchips, and it was fast paced, and you had to do thousands and thousands. And if you didn't do it, the supervisor is on your back, like, white on rice.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, goodness, so you didn't enjoy any of that. That's nothing like Judge Whitehead.

MS. BECKTON: Some times were good, because sometimes when we had good nights, he would let us go to Dairy Queen to get a sundae.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

MS. BECKTON: Yeah, so it wasn't so bad after all.

JUDGE LATIMORE: It wasn't bad at all, okay. So tell me about your family. How large is your family?

MS. BECKTON: Oh, I have a big family. I have eight sisters and seven brothers on my mom side and my dad side, so I have a very large family. And the majority of them are all here in Orlando.

JUDGE LATIMORE: That is wonderful. Tell me what you all do when you celebrate a big occasion. What does that look like?

MS. BECKTON: Oh, man. It's like food. It's like playing spades and just a lot of laughing and talking, you know.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay. And when it's the largest it can be, like tell me about how many people are going to be there because you have – that's a big family.

MS. BECKTON: Probably around 75.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Wow.

MS. BECKTON: Yeah.

JUDGE LATIMORE: That's a lot of food.

MS. BECKTON: Yeah, that's a lot of food and everybody cooks. And it's all good food, too.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right, and so what's the dish that they want Ms. Pat to bring?

MS. BECKTON: Collard greens.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right.

MS. BECKTON: Yep. Collard greens and –

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay, so you're a collard greens specialist.

MS. BECKTON: Collard greens specialist and sweet potato pie.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Do you have a friend that you would call family?

MS. BECKTON: Shirley Washington.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, and Ms. Washington was with us – with Judge Lauten.

MS. BECKTON: Yes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yes. All right, so do you all still keep in touch with each other?

MS. BECKTON: Yes, we do. Not as often because she retired before me. She was supposed to retire the same year that I did. Unbeknownst to me, she was retiring a year before me.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Uh-oh.

MS. BECKTON: So she actually put me in retirement mode.

JUDGE LATIMORE: There you go. It was motivation.

MS. BECKTON: Yes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Motivation for you to do that. All right, let me ask you just a couple of questions and tell me which ones you would pick. How about, are you an extrovert or introvert?

MS. BECKTON: Well, that depends on who I'm around.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh. So you're a little bit of both.

MS. BECKTON: A little bit of both, yes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay. That makes sense. Would you pick zoo or aquarium?

MS. BECKTON: Aquarium.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Jeep or Jet Ski?

MS. BECKTON: Jeep.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Jeep.

MS. BECKTON: Heck yeah. I'm afraid of the water.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Are you.

MS. BECKTON: Yes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Are you. Do you swim?

MS. BECKTON: I am what you would call a minnow.

JUDGE LATIMORE: A minnow.

MS. BECKTON: Yeah, my sister and I took – actually took swim lessons at the YMCA one year. And we graduated as minnows but that wasn't as bad as the tadpole.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, okay. That's right, you're at least one up.

MS. BECKTON: Yes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

MS. BECKTON: So I can float on my back. And I can't tread water because I'm afraid of the water so – but other than that, I'm okay.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

MS. BECKTON: I'll splash and play on the edge.

JUDGE LATIMORE: You will survive.

MS. BECKTON: I will.

JUDGE LATIMORE: What gives your life meaning?

MS. BECKTON: Family.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay. And how is your life different than what you may have imagined it to be when you were younger?

MS. BECKTON: When I was younger, it's almost what I would have imagined it to be because when I was younger I always wanted to be a legal secretary. But then I, as I got older,

you know, went through school and stuff, and I started working at UPS so I kind of like threw that under the bus. I was never going to be in the legal field, but then I met Judge Whitehead and I'm a judicial assistant so –

JUDGE LATIMORE: Won't he do it?

MS. BECKTON: Yes, he will.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right. And when you worked for UPS, what did you do with UPS?

MS. BECKTON: I was – when I left, I was a supervisor. I was supervisor of the accounting area and the billing department. So when I left there, after being there for 13 years, I left and went to the Urban League.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, wow. Now, did you wear the brown suit and drive the big truck?

MS. BECKTON: Yes, ma'am.

JUDGE LATIMORE: You did.

MS. BECKTON: Yes, I did. I drove, as a supervisor, you had to drive the truck and do deliveries for at least one month. So I drove the biggest one that they had which was the P1000.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right, now. And how was that experience when you did that?

MS. BECKTON: Oh, man, it was exhausting because you are on the run the whole time, from the time you got in the truck until the time you got out.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Tell me, Ms. Pat, what makes you feel at peace?

MS. BECKTON: Um, being at one with God.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And what are some of the challenges you might have in life?

MS. BECKTON: Probably being overly friendly.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay. And how is that a challenge for you?

MS. BECKTON: Because a lot of people, you know, they see me smiling all the time and somebody might say, why are you always smiling. It's because I love the Lord and the Lord is good to me, so I have to be good to other people.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right. Tell me what's your favorite holiday?

MS. BECKTON: Christmas.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Why is that?

MS. BECKTON: Because all the family are around. You get to give gifts; you get to receive gifts. You get to have food and be happy and be merry, and you don't have to go to work.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And family is really important to you, right?

MS. BECKTON: Yes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: What makes you proud of your family?

MS. BECKTON: Just the love that we have for one another. When I got married to my husband – it's been four years now and when he came into my family, he said, oh, wow, I never seen so many people that love to hug and love to kiss.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, that's wonderful.

MS. BECKTON: So that's what we do every time we greet each other, it's a hug or a kiss.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay. So you grew up in Eatonville.

MS. BECKTON: Um-hum.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And have you traveled outside of Florida much?

MS. BECKTON: No, not much. I've been to New York and Boston. That was when I was 16 so I don't remember a whole lot about that. But I've been to D.C. and I've been to Las Vegas, and I've been to California.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And where else would you like to visit?

MS. BECKTON: Hawaii.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, yes, that would be wonderful.

MS. BECKTON: Yes, um-hum.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Have you ever thought about living anywhere other than Florida?

MS. BECKTON: Las Vegas.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Why Las Vegas?

MS. BECKTON: Because that's where my husband is from and he has an aunt that lives there so when we told her that I was retiring, she said, oh, you could move out here. So I say, yes, we can. So ever since then, she's – every time I talk to her, she tells me, you all need to come on out and start looking for your house.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay. Speaking it to existence, right.

MS. BECKTON: Yes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Now, do you like cold weather because it can get pretty nippy in Las Vegas.

MS. BECKTON: But usually it's warm from what she tells me. I think I can stand it for a little while.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right. Well, that sounds wonderful. Well, it was so wonderful speaking with you. Thank you for being unplugged with me, Ms. Pat.

MS. BECKTON: Thank you for having me.

(Music)