

9<sup>TH</sup> UNPLUGGED

HONORABLE JAMES CRANER

CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE

MARCH 9, 2023

HOSTED BY: HONORABLE ALICIA L. LATIMORE

JUDGE LATIMORE: Hi, I'm Judge Latimore.

JUDGE CRANER: And I'm Judge Craner.

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

(Music)

JUDGE LATIMORE: Well, welcome, Judge Craner. Thank you for being here with us today and we are about to get unplugged but would you please share with our audience your division assignment and how long you've been on the bench?

JUDGE CRANER: Absolutely. I'm currently assigned to division 36, Circuit Civil, have been for 15 months. And prior to that I've been in most of the other divisions and I started in 2011 in county, county civil, county criminal, dependency, criminal and civil now.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Which is your favorite division assignment?

JUDGE CRANER: Easy, dependency.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Dependency. Mine too.

JUDGE CRANER: Babies.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yes.

JUDGE CRANER: Kids.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Talking about the children and the families.

JUDGE CRANER: That's right.

JUDGE LATIMORE: That's what we do.

JUDGE CRANER: That's right.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right. So thank you for being here again. Let's get unplugged.

JUDGE CRANER: Thank you.

JUDGE LATIMORE: So tell me what you like to do most of all when you're not at work.

JUDGE CRANER: Beach.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Beach. I can tell. I was going to go there because you look like you've been to the beach recently.

JUDGE CRANER: We haven't.

JUDGE LATIMORE: You have not.

JUDGE CRANER: No, but we're outside a lot. We go on the weekends to the beach and it's just wonderful. We go over for two and a half days and just relax.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay. And are you doing water sports or are you –

JUDGE CRANER: No. Sit on the beach.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Just sitting on the beach.

JUDGE CRANER: In a chair with a book or a magazine.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Escaping.

JUDGE CRANER: And unplugging. Yeah.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yes. What's your favorite book?

JUDGE CRANER: I don't have a favorite book, really. I just bought one for my wife. When she's finished reading it, if she approves, I'll read it too. It's called Young Forever by Dr. Hyman. And he talks about living to be a 120, 140 years old if you do certain things now. I heard about it on a podcast no less than a month ago and I went ahead and bought it for my wife so –

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yeah, my family would have something to say to him if they kept me around for 120 years so –

JUDGE CRANER: I'm not sure I want to be here that long.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Right.

JUDGE CRANER: I don't know where I'd be, but –

JUDGE LATIMORE: But I do understand that you do woodworking and painting.

JUDGE CRANER: Yes. Yeah, weekdays when I want to unwind, I paint, I draw, acrylic paints primarily. I'm working with watercolors now, not with a lot of success, that really doesn't –

JUDGE LATIMORE: How did you get into painting?

JUDGE CRANER: I started in 8<sup>th</sup> grade in Columbus, Ohio. We started painting on canvass and I did this 4-foot square canvass of a Porsche, and the Marlboro cigarette man no less without the cigarette in his hand. I was allowed to paint that as a student back then but it's still hanging on my wall in my garage and I did no less than 15 or 20 over the next five years. And then I kind of let it go for a period of time. And then probably 15 years ago, we bought a sign and I wanted one like it so I made one identical to it.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And that got you back into it.

JUDGE CRANER: Sign painting, and then we'd find pallets on the ground and take them apart and make trays and then paint on the trays.

JUDGE LATIMORE: You ever sell any of your paintings?

JUDGE CRANER: No. My wife says I should but I give them away.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, Okay. All right, and the woodworking, how did you get into that?

JUDGE CRANER: My dad introduced it to me 40 years ago and left some tools with me and I just got back into it. I find it relaxing if you can put something together and it looks reasonably –

JUDGE LATIMORE: Making tables, chairs.

JUDGE CRANER: Yeah, I'm finishing up four Adirondack chairs right now.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Wow.

JUDGE CRANER: Yeah, I make Adirondack chairs. The four that we have over at the beach are falling apart. They're 20 years old so I'm going to go ahead and replace those, so I'm just getting those finished up now.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay, and you haven't had any – you're safe with the –

JUDGE CRANER: I've got all my fingers crossed.

JUDGE LATIMORE: That's what I was going to ask, making –

JUDGE CRANER: One of our judges lost a finger. I don't know if you knew that, 20 years ago.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, unfortunate. I didn't know that. Well, at least you're safe and you have all your –

JUDGE CRANER: Digits.

JUDGE LATMORE: Connected to you. All right. And so with that I understand that you do hunt also.

JUDGE CRANER: I do. I do when I get a chance.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Now, what do you hunt?

JUDGE CRANER: Here, in Florida, Central Florida Osceola turkeys. And here in Florida deer, hog. We've spent some time down on the Mormon Ranch, and that's how many hundred thousand acres broken up into various leases.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

JUDGE CRANER: So a couple of my friends have leases down there and they've invited us to go. We've been on the lease one or more years over time. Most exciting hunt we did –

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay, I was going to ask you that.

JUDGE CRANER: -- Argentina.

JUDGE LATIMORE: So tell me about that.

JUDGE CRANER: Dove hunting in Argentina.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Dove hunting.

JUDGE CRANER: A good friend of mine said, look, we're going to Argentina, if you want to go, and I looked at my wife and I said, can I – you know I'd like to go to Argentina and dove hunt. She said absolutely, as long as I can go too. So we went to Argentina –

JUDGE LATIMORE: Smart woman.

JUDGE CRANER: She got pink cameo. She cameoed up.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Did she.

JUDGE CRANER: And we grabbed everything. And you fly from here to Buenos Aires, you jump on another flight for three hours and you're in nowhere. And the dove is very prevalent in the fields down there, in the cow fields. They're all about cows and red wine. And the dove just destroys the fields and eat the cows' food so the farmers hire everybody to come in and get rid of them.

JUDGE LATIMORE: How successful were you?

JUDGE CRANER: We would kill on any given hunt 1,000 birds and a given hunt being in the morning, from 8:00 to 10:00, 8:00 to 11:00.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Wow.

JUDGE CRANER: We had a pile of birds the size of this table. Ten feet wide and three feet high.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Now, you couldn't bring them back with you, could you?

JUDGE CRANER: We did. We did. When we came back from Mexico, they'll actually freeze them and put them in a bag, and you can bring them back with you. These we didn't though. We donated these to the locals there and they would actually eat them. And they were

out there hunting with us. They would literally, when we shot them, they would run and grab them and bag them and take them home.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay, all right.

JUDGE CRANER: We had a great time. You're down there for a three-day hunt. You fly in, you hunt three days –

JUDGE LATIMORE: Did you do anything other than hunt while you were there?

JUDGE CRANER: We went to Buenos Aires and walked all over the city. We went and got the finest food in the world. We drank the red wine. Everything down there is steak. Steak for breakfast, steak for lunch and steak for dinner.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Sounds like my type of place.

JUDGE CRANER: It was fabulous. Most beautiful city, very European.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Wonderful. Is that your favorite spot to visit?

JUDGE CRANER: Not necessarily. I wouldn't mind going back there. The favorite spot we went to recently was – well, we went to Dublin.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

JUDGE CRANER: And spent – Ireland, I should say. We spent a week there, about two years ago during COVID. That was fun.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Was it.

JUDGE CRANER: Yeah, it was wonderful. What a wonderful trip. And what a wonderful country.



JUDGE LATIMORE: Yes.

JUDGE CRANER: It's neat and everybody is extremely friendly. The food was very good.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Did you take your family with you as well?

JUDGE CRANER: No, my wife and I went on a whim. And we rented a car so you're sitting in a car driving on the right-hand side, that's wrong. You're driving on the left-hand side of the road, that's wrong. And it's a five-speed transmission and everything here is an automatic so that's wrong. So it was a triple whammy. But – and you go around – everything – there are no lights. Everything is a roundabout. Roundabout, roundabout. Easy as pie to get around. Had no issues at all whatsoever. We got there Sunday morning and drove north to Belfast and then we drove south and then east and then – we were east because we were in Dublin, it's on the east coast and then west all the way to the cliffs.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

JUDGE CRANER: So we had a great time. Wonderful place.

JUDGE LATIMORE: So you have kids though. You have –

JUDGE CRANER: I have three daughters.

JUDGE LATIMORE: -- daughters. Yes. Three daughters. House full of women.

JUDGE CRANER: Yeah, well, not so much now. They're all moved out. We're kind of empty nesters. We have one left with us. But yeah, they're all in their twenties. The –

JUDGE LATIMORE: What do they do?

JUDGE CRANER: Well, my oldest is a nurse practitioner, graduated from Georgetown and she's working at a local hospital in the intensive care. Loves it. She's been there – she's been a nurse for probably five or six years. Does great work. My middle one just graduated from Auburn and she works in the music industry in Nashville.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Nice.

JUDGE CRANER: For a publicist up there and she's rubbing elbows with all the musicians.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Does she sing?

JUDGE CRANER: No. No, but she can wrangle them. You know, she'll tell you stories about Dierks Bentley being in her office –

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, that's exciting.

JUDGE CRANER: And Morgan Wallen – Morgan Wallen recently at the country music awards. She was there –

JUDGE LATIMORE: Have you gotten a chance to meet any of these celebrities?

JUDGE CRANER: No, I have not. She's been there eight weeks. She just got there.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, she's just out there. Okay.

JUDGE CRANER: So, yeah, we haven't seen her.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Well, we wish her the best of luck with that.

JUDGE CRANER: She's doing fabulous, yeah. And my youngest is a teacher on the east side at a local high school.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Wonderful.

JUDGE CRANER: So yeah...

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay. So I'm wondering if you were able to just pick, you won the lotto and you were able to decide what you would like to do with all of that money other than pay bills, what would you do?

JUDGE CRANER: Buy an island.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Buy an island.

JUDGE CRANER: I would. I would buy an island –

JUDGE LATIMORE: That's exciting.

JUDGE CRANER: -- somewhere remote with a house on it and a boat and go.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And be able to hunt.

JUDGE CRANER: Well, I'd probably give that up.

JUDGE LATIMORE: You'd give that up.

JUDGE CRANER: I'd probably hunt. If I wanted to, I could probably fly somewhere, couldn't I?

JUDGE LATIMORE: You could.

JUDGE CRANER: But not on the island so I would just live on the island in a house.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right.

JUDGE CRANER: And have a garden.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Be sure to invite me.

JUDGE CRANER: Absolutely.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right. Thanks for being unplugged with me today.

JUDGE CRANER: Thank you very much for all you do.

(Music)