

9<sup>TH</sup> UNPLUGGED

KELLY STEELE

DIRECTOR OF CASE MANAGEMENT

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HOSTED BY: HONORABLE ALICIA L. LATIMORE

JUDGE LATIMORE: Hi, I'm Judge Alicia Latimore.

MS. STEELE: And I'm Kelly Steele.

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

(Music)

JUDGE LATIMORE: So welcome, Kelly. Glad to have you here on 9<sup>th</sup> Unplugged.

Would you tell our audience what your job responsibilities are and how long you've been with the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit?

MS. STEELE: Sure, so I've been with the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit for almost ten years now, since 2013. And I am currently the director for case management, so I work with a lot of programs, primarily problem solving courts, civil case management, and then I work with security and statistics. And I did whatever we all did during the pandemic for the last two years, which I can't really remember. But that's most of what I do here at the court.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right, wonderful. Thank you. So we're going to go ahead and get unplugged.

MS. STEELE: Okay.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right, and find out a little bit more about you. Now, where were you born and raised?

MS. STEELE: I was born and raised in Olympia, Washington. It's about an hour south of Seattle.

JUDGE LATIMORE: What's special about Olympia?

MS. STEELE: You know it's – it gets a bad rap for the rain but very technically Florida gets a lot more rain than Olympia, Washington does. It has sort of a gray hue to it but the summers can't be beat. So anywhere you can go, where in August it's 75 and you can wear a swimsuit during the day and jeans at night, is a place where you want to be in August.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Do you visit often?

MS. STEELE: I do. My dad still lives in Olympia so I go out once a year maybe to see him and you know cool off.

JUDGE LATIMORE: How did you end up in Florida?

MS. STEELE: So I went to college in Atlanta and met my husband there. And he moves us around so I'm what they call a trailing spouse. And he – his company is based here in Orlando so we moved here about ten years ago for his job.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right. So what do you like the most about Orlando?

MS. STEELE: Oh, so I would probably then say the winters. I like one of both ways. I'm the person who wants two houses.

JUDGE LATIMORE: There you go.

MS. STEELE: So the winters here are great. Like January in Florida is fantastic. I – we like to play golf. We like to be outside. You know, and it kind of can't be beat in January and February so that's what I like the most. We're not really beach people so makes sense why we're in Central Florida, I guess.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yes.

MS. STEELE: But we like the mild winter.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And what do you like the least about Florida?

MS. STEELE: Probably the hot summer.

JUDGE LATIMORE: That's what everyone – I knew that was coming.

MS. STEELE: Everybody's chief complaint. I'm not a huge like Disney fan or like amusement park fan so everything that comes with that isn't you know something that I love but I do like Mickey's Very Merry Christmas Party.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, you do.

MS. STEELE: I think it's because my birthday is that –

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, okay. All right.

MS. STEELE: So it's like free cookies.

JUDGE LATIMORE: What is it that you and your husband do just to have a really – a really fun time? What is it that you do?

MS. STEELE: So we like to travel. I like to travel like, I like to plan and I like to travel and I'm, you know the annoying planner person in the travel. He hates –

JUDGE LATIMORE: So you have the itinerary during the vacation.

MS. STEELE: Yeah, one hundred percent.

JUDGE LATIMORE: You're not the one that's just going to stay in the hotel and Netflix.

MS. STEELE: No, I'm that person who develops like group spreadsheet and has like times on the left and like days on the right.

JUDGE LATIMORE: For the vacation.

MS. STEELE: For the vacation. So it's more about the lead up to the vacation and then like the vacation goes smoothly because someone's spent a lot of time and energy on the front. And then he doesn't like the front. Like it's all going to be terrible. Like we shouldn't go. Like blah, blah, blah, and then we go and it's fun and he has a good time. So we enjoy – we enjoy traveling. You know his family lives in Tallahassee so we go up there pretty often and my family is kind of scattered all over the place so –

JUDGE LATIMORE: Do you travel internationally?

MS. STEELE: We do. We – our first trip after the pandemic was Greece. We went to Greece in May. Highly recommend it. We went on a small boat cruise where we were probably the youngest – the youngest people by a couple decades on the cruise ship but –

JUDGE LATIMORE: So shuffleboard and all that?

MS. STEELE: Shuffleboard. Lots of like top deck sunbathing, but it's like 20 or 30 people so it's kind – it was kind of a more intimate cruise but a great way to see Greece so I got to see the islands.

JUDGE LATIMORE: So I understand you're a twin.

MS. STEELE: I am.

JUDGE LATIMORE: I didn't know that.

MS. STEELE: I am. My twin sister lives in Waco, Texas. She works for Baylor.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Identical.

MS. STEELE: We are, um-hum.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, my goodness.

MS. STEELE: But she still colors her hair so...

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

MS. STEELE: It's a little obvious like when we're next to each other. But yeah, she lives in Texas so I'm there a lot. My best friend lives out there too.

JUDGE LATIMORE: So if you could fix this country, how would you do that?

MS. STEELE: Oh, goodness. You know I was just at a conference where I had this epiphany where I decided that what was really wrong with our country was that I was sitting outside trying to have dinner and someone drove by with music playing really loud. Like no one else was around and had any sort of preferences maybe related to not listening to that person's music really loudly. And so I think some sort of shared empathy or understanding for what other people around you might prefer and balancing that against what you prefer would be a great improvement for us right now.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Nice start –

MS. STEELE: Nice start. It would be a good building block or a base to build on I think.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yes. What are some of your personal rules that you would never break?

MS. STEELE: Oh, that's difficult. I don't know if I have a ton of personal rules and I hardly ever say never. I always say should work for 90 percent of the people 90 percent of the time because I always want to fudge room. But you know I – I try to – you probably notice this because we work together a lot, but I always try to hedge a lot on what I say because I don't ever want to be misleading to someone. So I often start with things like, well, it's my understanding or from my perspective, or given the information that I have so I think that's probably a rule I try really hard not to break, which is I don't want – I don't want to provide inaccurate information or inconsistent information. I want – I want people to be able to make good decisions based on the information that I can provide so I try really hard to be straightforward and honest and paint –

JUDGE LATIMORE: You do a great job.

MS. STEELE: -- a clear picture of what we're looking at.

JUDGE LATIMORE: You do a great job at that and you're very accurate, and you are full of information. I can tell you that. Okay, this is a question I've been wanting to ask my guests and you are the perfect person for me to ask. What would be your first question after waking up from being cryogenically frozen for 100 years? I would love to know what Kelly's question would be, okay.

MS. STEELE: Do we still have clean water? Are there still trees? Is there ice in Antarctica?

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yes. Is the human species still around?

MS. STEELE: I mean, that's – like if I think you know, is Florida – does Florida have an island now? Like off the end, like did we get encroached by water? You know and I think of time, like that is something the environmental impacts of people and life and things like that, I

think is something that I would really notice in 100 years because 100 years is both a long a long time and not a long time. My great aunt is turning 96 this weekend and I think about what an interesting 96 years that would have been to live because so much has changed.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yes.

MS. STEELE: -- in her lifetime. But I think that, I don't know that difference will exist in the next 100 years in the same way it existed for her in this sort of like technology space. So to me it would probably be much more about our environment than it will be necessarily about you know microchips and the internet.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Would you be interested in flying to Mars, or going on a rocket to Mars?

MS. STEELE: I would not – that is – I am completely uninterested in an adrenalin rush. Like, I like to ski but I like to use gravity. I don't – I'm not interested in like going off a cliff.

JUDGE LATIMORE: No roller coasters.

MS. STEELE: No bungee jumping, no –

JUDGE LATIMORE: None of that.

MS. STEELE: Yeah, not interested.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Aside from the adrenalin rush though, would you be curious about what's going on on other planets

MS. STEELE: Um, you know, no. I don't need more. I don't need more stuff to like think about and contemplate you know. If they're making it work up there and I'm ignorant, ignorance is bliss.



JUDGE LATIMORE: I just don't want to go and they decide to leave me there.

MS. STEELE: Right, right, no –

JUDGE LATIMORE: That's my only fear about it so that's why I'm like, I'm good, right on earth.

MS. STEELE: Yeah. I'm right here, yeah.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Thank you, Kelly, for being unplugged with me today.

MS. STEELE: Yeah, of course.

(Music)