

9<sup>TH</sup> UNPLUGGED

ASTRID RODRIGUEZ

MANAGER, COURT INTERPRETING SERVICES

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HOSTED BY: HONORABLE ALICIA L. LATIMORE

JUDGE LATIMORE: Hi, I'm Judge Latimore.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: And I'm Astrid Rodriguez.

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

(Music)

JUDGE LATIMORE: So before we get started, please tell me your name and the department that you work for.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: I'm Astrid Rodriguez, and I work for the court interpreting department.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And what are your responsibilities?

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Well, I am the manager of the department so basically, just to make sure that we cover our courts, that we schedule interpreters for other languages as well. That we have sufficient interpreters in both Orange and Osceola, and that we communicate with the judges and their jas as to any difficulties we have with languages or things of that nature.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Do you speak more than one language?

MS. RODRIGUEZ: I do. I speak Spanish.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay. And in your position what is the most exotic language you've had requested?

MS. RODRIGUEZ: The one that keeps popping up in my mind would be Tigrinya, and I could not tell you what – I think it's an African language, but I don't recall. That only came up

once but for whatever reason, I don't know if it's because I like the way the language sounds or it reminds me of a tiger, but that's the one I would say that sticks out the most.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right. So let's get unplugged. So what do you do when you're not at work managing interpreters and interpretations?

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Well, I love to spend time with my family. I have a big family. I have four sisters that live here in Florida besides my mom. We just moved my mom here last month so we're all here. And then we all have children and grandchildren, and things of that nature. So we like to get together for family outings, which we have not had since COVID began. So we're looking forward to hopefully you know in the next six months or so being able to resume some of those things. But as a family, we would just get together and play games or go bowling, and things of that nature.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And how many siblings do you have?

MS. RODRIGUEZ: So on my – on my mother's side, which I know this is weird, but I consider the children that my mother has as my full siblings so on my mother's side, I have four sisters. And so with myself there's five of us.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Five girls.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Five girls. All girls, no boys.

JUDGE LATIMORE: What was that like growing up?

MS. RODRIGUEZ: I loved it. I mean, I always wanted a brother and I actually do have brothers on my father's side, only one of which I've actually had like a relationship with. But I

always wanted a brother but it wasn't something I knew so I wasn't, you know what I mean, it wasn't like I, or darn, you know. But –

JUDGE LATIMORE: What you don't have you don't miss.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Right.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Kind of.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Kind of. And I do have – I mean, I consider – I have a brother in law who's been in my life since I was 11 so I do consider him my brother.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: So I – you know he was the one that taught me about sports, and card games, and wrestling, and baseball and all of those things, so I do consider him my brother.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, wonderful. What are your proudest moments or what are you proudest of in your life?

MS. RODRIGUEZ: I would say one of the really proud moments aside from of course, you know, just the happiness of being like a mom and things of that nature, but one of the things I was proudest of was when I graduated from college because I was like thirty something at the time. That only happened in 1999.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: So I was 35 but none of my sisters at that point had – none of us had gone to college. And I remember my mother who was a very hard working, who was always a very hard working person, I remember her offering to pay for college for me. And like telling me that she was willing to work a couple of jobs so that I would go to college. And I did not take her

up on it. And I don't regret it in a sense that I didn't want her to have to do that anyway, but when I was ready and I knew what I wanted to study, I went ahead and – went ahead and went to college and so I had her come to Florida for my graduation and everything. It was a very proud moment for her and for myself.

JUDGE LATIMORE: I bet. I bet. That is wonderful. And what did you want to study?

MS. RODRIGUEZ: I love the law so my things are the law and accounting, are my two big things. They're probably not related in any way, but for whatever reason those are my two passions. So I love the law and I love accounting, so I went to school for paralegal.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Wonderful. That's interesting. And so let's talk about food because I always like to talk about food.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Okay.

JUDGE LATIMORE: What's your favorite food?

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Okay, so there's – my two favorite dishes are of course Spanish dishes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: So my mother is an excellent cook and my second oldest sister, Wanda is an excellent cook as well. Like she's very close to mom.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: But mom is still at 81, still takes the prize. So my mother makes pasteles, which is, I don't know if you've ever had one or you're familiar with.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yes.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: They're so delicious.

JUDGE LATIMORE: If you could explain for the listeners.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: So pasteles, it's made of like potatoes and you can have yucca ones if you like. Green bananas, green plantains and you grind all that, right. And then she mixes like a little bit of oil into it and you know salt for taste and things. And then the meat is like pork, so like pork shoulder and whatever and she cooks that. And we – she – we would sit around – we would stand around the table like an assembly line because of course she had five girls so we were able to do this, right. And we would put the thing on there with the meat, wrap it up and freeze them and then when you're ready to eat them, you boil them and eat them, and they're delicious. And please do not put ketchup on pasteles. They taste delicious on their own.

JUDGE LATIMORE: That's the rule for the day, right.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: So that's one of my favorite things. And the other thing is sancocho, which is sort of like a beef stew.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: But it's also with the same – it also has the same kind of, if you notice a trend here.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yes.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: The same kind of – it has the green plantains and the green bananas and potatoes, and like yucca and yams and things like that.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Now, I understand, it says here that you do not – you eat zero veggies.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Absolutely, no vegetables.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Not a carrot.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Not a carrot.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Not a celery.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: No.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Not broccoli.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Nothing.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Nothing.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: None of those.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay. All right.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: None of those.

JUDGE LATIMORE: None of those. And is it just – what is it, the taste, the texture, what is it about vegetables?

MS. RODRIGUEZ: I think it's the – I think it's the texture. Because actually, so I don't eat vegetables, I don't eat onions or pickles or any of that, but I like the flavor. I like the flavor of onions, so I'll put onion powder on things. I'll put garlic powder. I won't chew any of those things. The same thing with onions, like the consistency of it for me is no good.

JUDGE LATIMORE: No good. All right. What are some of your personal rules that you never break?

MS. RODRIGUEZ: As I've gotten – I'm not going to say this like prior to me being like 30 or 35, but as a full functioning adult, I don't lie. I find there's no reason for that. It's always better to like admit whatever, if you made a mistake or you know you did something you shouldn't have done or whatever. I always feel that it's always better to be honest about it. I think as adults I don't find a reason why we would lie to each other about something, you know. And I – so I don't like that because I like people to know that if I'm saying something to you, it's 100 percent on board. And I don't mean like, if someone says, how is this dress – how does this dress look, and you feel like, oh, it's hideous. That's different. I'm not going to say, oh, it's hideous, you know, I'm going to say, you know, I'm not crazy about it or something, or try not to hurt anyone's feelings. But I like honesty.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And what do you do that makes you feel truly alive?

MS. RODRIGUEZ: I think, and so this decision came right before I turned 50. I decided that it was time for me to put myself first and what I mean by that, it's not that you can't like do something for other people or take care of someone else instead of yourself in this particular time because they need you more or whatever. But just in general, I was always careful to like not hurt somebody's feelings, like in the sense of, like they would say something that was hurtful and I would remain silent because I didn't want to hurt them – their feelings but I wasn't – like I was keeping it bottled in and it was causing me pain. So it was something just changes, like I decided that I wanted to buy this house and I had ended my marriage and whatever. And I said – I was telling my daughter who's an adult, you know what, from here on out, it's going to be



different. I'm going to be honest. I'm going to let people know what I'm about, what I like, what I don't like, what I'm okay with. And –

JUDGE LATIMORE: Practice some self-care.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: I've been doing that. And you know – yeah, and it isn't that everything's perfect, it's just that it's the right – it was the right decision for me. And I love it.

JUDGE LATIMORE: I love it too.

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

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

MS. RODRIGUEZ: Thank you, Your Honor.

(Music)