

9TH UNPLUGGED

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COURT PROGRAM SPECIALIST II

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HOSTED BY: HONORABLE ALICIA L. LATIMORE

JUDGE LATIMORE: Hi, I'm Judge Latimore.

MS. DITOMASSO: And I'm Liz DiTomasso.

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

(Music)

JUDGE LATIMORE: So before we get unplugged, if you'll please explain to our audience what your position is, what you do in that position, and how long you've been with the Ninth Circuit?

MS. DITOMASSO: I am a court program specialist II. I just got hired on August 23rd so I am brand new.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Welcome. Nice.

MS. DITOMASSO: Thank you so much. I actually have the pleasure of being an assistant to Magistrate Juna Pulayya. So out of all the people hired in that position, I am helping him on a daily basis to unpack what is going on in the civil courts and just really get the civil courts caught up.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay, and what did you do before you came to this position?

MS. DITOMASSO: I worked in the fitness industry through 2020. COVID had a really bad impact on the fitness industry so I lost my job. I was an area manager for a large fitness chain, so I was in charge of the group fitness department for several locations of that particular fitness chain. And I would ensure that the group fitness schedule was what the members wanted and was fun, and well attended. And would look after the instructors.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And so are you really into fitness?

MS. DITOMASSO: I am.

JUDGE LATIMORE: You are. Okay, great. Let's get unplugged and so we'll stop talking about work and talk about fitness a little bit. So tell me, what did you do in regards to fitness on your own, you know, other than being that manager?

MS. DITOMASSO: Yeah, other than being the manager, I've been a group fitness instructor because I love to work out and if you can get paid to work out –

JUDGE LATIMORE: Amen.

MS. DITOMASSO: -- while you're also motivating other people, it was like the best of all worlds, so that was probably my favorite part. I also spent almost eight years as a trainer of other instructors. So I would travel around the country over the weekend and I would facilitate these workshops to help other instructors get certified to become instructors themselves. I loved that process of just teaching them what I knew about being a great group fitness instructor and helping them to forge their own path in the industry.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Now, when you speak of group fitness, are you speaking of like Zumba, or Step or aerob – I mean --

MS. DITOMASSO: All of that.

JUDGE LATIMORE: You did all of that?

MS. DITOMASSO: Yeah. It's anything that happens in the studio, in that studio. Yeah, group fitness used to be known as a real mix back in the day.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Back – yeah, I aged myself just then.

MS. DITOMASSO: That's exactly what it is.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yes, I did. Okay, so what's your favorite group fitness?

MS. DITOMASSO: I actually currently love high intensity interval training. So I love that you can do 30 minutes of that as hard as you can go because it's all based on how fit you are at the moment so truly you cater it to where you are now. But I love that you get done in 30 minutes and you feel like you have worked hard. I just think gone are the days where you have to think about working out for a full hour where you're just trying to sustain a steady rate. I'm definitely much more of the, okay, this is efficient. It gave me a great workout. It's more of what sprinters do so if you think of a marathon runner's body versus a sprinter, they're very different body types usually and that's because you're working different muscles in different ways when you do HIIT versus aerobic training.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Absolutely. So with fitness comes nutrition, correct.

MS. DITOMASSO: Um-hum.

JUDGE LATIMORE: What's your favorite food?

MS. DITOMASSO: I mostly stick to vegetables. I know that's super boring but I love just again like efficiency is such a big thing in my life. I love taking, cutting up vegetables, putting them in veggie broth and just using this 21 Salute Seasoning from Trader Joe's, it's so tasty.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

MS. DITOMASSO: I love doing that, maybe I throw it on some lettuce or maybe I make myself a veggie burger, a homemade veggie burger. I tend to make my own things. I don't like a lot of store bought.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay, and so you don't eat a lot of meat?

MS. DITOMASSO: Not really.

JUDGE LATIMORE: You're speaking to a true carnivore over here, I want you to know. Okay, I'm a real meat eater but I'm working on that. I am absolutely working on all of that. So tell me, what was your first job?

MS. DITOMASSO: I was a busser at a buffet. I wanted to work as early as humanly possible because I wanted money to buy a car.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

MS. DITOMASSO: So they hired me at 15 and I remember working 10-hour shifts on the weekend.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Are you from Florida because –

MS. DITOMASSO: No, I'm from Pennsylvania originally.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Originally from Pennsylvania.

MS. DITOMASSO: Yeah.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay, and so they did that too with the 15-year old, you can start working --

MS. DITOMASSO: Yeah, they just –

JUDGE LATIMORE: -- with a work permit.

MS. DITOMASSO: Yep.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right, and how did you like bussing?

MS. DITOMASSO: It was a little bit scary because we had regulars, which you know at a buffet, to have, you know, people that regularly come and eat as much as they can because you're going to pay a lot of money, you want a lot of food to make sure you got your value's worth.

JUDGE LATIMORE: I guess so.

MS. DITOMASSO: I did like the tips.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Tell me this, what would you change about yourself if you could? Is there anything?

MS. DITOMASSO: That's a good question, yeah, of course. I'm always working on things. I am currently working on being less judgmental of myself and of other people. And I'm just at least noticing when I'm being judgmental so that I can just be more compassionate.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yeah, that's fair.

MS. DITOMASSO: Compassionate is important.

JUDGE LATIMORE: That's fair, and I think if all of us did that, that that would make a better world, wouldn't it?

MS. DITOMASSO: It would.

JUDGE LATIMORE: It would be nice if we all tried to do that. I'll remember that as well. If you could live anywhere other than Orlando, is there a particular place you'd love to live?

MS. DITOMASSO: I love Sydney. I went there during law school for a semester over the summer and I remember thinking if this weren't a million miles away from my family, I would definitely think about moving here.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Now, what did you like about Sydney?

MS. DITOMASSO: I loved that you could take a bus and be at the beach, but then it's a major city so you have all of the culture of the city. I love the attitude of Australians. They're much more laid back I think than Americans. Generally speaking, they have a much better balance I think to their work and their personal life.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay, and have you been able to visit since you were there in law school?

MS. DITOMASSO: No, I've been to New Zealand since but not back to Australia.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay. All right, and do you have a bucket list?

MS. DITOMASSO: I do.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Is Australia on your bucket list?

MS. DITOMASSO: I think I'd rather go to places I haven't seen yet.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay. All right.

MS. DITOMASSO: Iceland is definitely on my list.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, is it. All right, and what else is on your list?

MS. DITOMASSO: What else is on my bucket list? Travelling is definitely a big one. That's probably at the top. Passing the bar. I'm taking the Florida Bar in February. I want to pass the bar and actually practice this time.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yes.

MS. DITOMASSO: I did pass the bar in Pennsylvania when I first got out of law school, but I didn't really practice. I went right into the fitness industry. So that's definitely on my bucket list.

JUDGE LATIMORE: You are a lot braver than me. I said one bar was enough for me.

MS. DITOMASSO: You know what, I said that back in the day too.

JUDGE LATIMORE: That's why I'm living in Florida until –

MS. DITOMASSO: That's what I said too.

JUDGE LATIMORE: - I stop working.

MS. DITOMASSO: I'll never take another bar exam. But here I am. Those are the only two that are really coming to mind most immediately.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay. What is your guilty pleasure?

MS. DITOMASSO: Guilty pleasure, I love chocolate. Anything chocolate. Any kind of chocolate in any way, shape or form, I'll eat it.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right. Have you ever been to a chocolate factory or can I add that to your bucket list?

MS. DITOMASSO: You can add that.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

MS. DITOMASSO: You can add that.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay, let's keep that on the bucket list. If you were able to just sit down and have a day or a brunch with a celebrity, who would that be?

MS. DITOMASSO: Oh, that's a good question too. Celebrity. I don't know why, Cameron Diaz just popped into my mind. I feel like she went from being this kind of like, you know, romantic comedy movie actress to kind of spiritual and private and it seems like she's really working on her personal life. I like people that do that, that do a lot of self-reflection. It seems like she's in a more self-reflective part of life.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay. Now do you do anything like mediation or –

MS. DITOMASSO: I do. I meditate every day.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay. I kind of pulled that from your conversation that you kind of got a well-rounded program when it comes to physical, emotional, spiritual, all of those things as well.

MS. DITOMASSO: Yes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And so how does meditation benefit you? Can you share that with our audience?

MS. DITOMASSO: Oh, my word. I can, I actually this morning when I sat down to meditate, I had so many thoughts that most of us have going through our minds like about what I had to do. I forgot to do this yesterday at work. I want to do this today. And then immediately I was able to drop into a place where the thoughts kind of just flowed out of your mind and you

just are centered. I think the biggest benefit to that is once you meditate for a while, you don't just do it. You don't just drop into that place when you're sitting and meditating. You find that that crosses over into your regular waking life where you can quiet your mind more and not constantly have the hamster wheel of thoughts happening all the time. So it's a benefit because life is stressful no matter what you do, no matter who you are and what you're doing, life is stressful. So the ability to be able to drop in and not constantly have chatter in your mind, is just I think a skill everybody could use.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Absolutely. You're preaching to the choir. Okay, so can you tell me this, is there anything that you regret not doing up until today, to this point in your life? Is there something you regret that you haven't done, or you didn't do?

MS. DITOMASSO: Honestly, it would have been pursuing law because I went away from it almost immediately after passing the bar. And having lost my job through COVID, it's really where I did soul-searching about you know, if I don't do it now, I'm not going to do it. And then I'm going to look back years later and say, maybe I would have really liked it if I would have given it a fair chance later in life when I wasn't in my mid-twenties.

JUDGE LATIMORE: What area do you want to practice?

MS. DITOMASSO: I think employment. I love human resources. All these years of working and some companies who, in my opinion, got human resources really wrong, I was really fascinated with that and building cultures, really fascinated by that facet of employment. And naturally, I think employment law might be interesting based on that.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yeah. Well, we're claiming passing the bar, and invite me to your swearing in, please.

MS. DITOMASSO: I will, thank you.

JUDGE LATIMORE: You're welcome. Thank you for being unplugged with me.

MS. DITOMASSO: It was such a pleasure. Thank you.

(Music)