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OPEN NINTH:
CONVERSATIONS BEYOND THE COURTROOM
CHANNEL 9th: SEVERE WEATHER
EPISODE 30
SEPTEMBER 5, 2017
HOSTED BY: FREDERICK J. LAUTEN

1 (Music.)

2 >> Welcome to another episode of "Open Ninth:
3 Conversations Beyond the Courtroom" in the Ninth Judicial
4 Circuit Court of Florida.

5 Now here's your host, Chief Judge Fred Lauten.

6 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Good afternoon. I'm thrilled to
7 be at WFTV's Weather Studio with Chief Meteorologist Tom
8 Terry for our podcast. And from one chief to another, thanks
9 for doing this.

10 >> **TOM TERRY:** It's a pleasure to meet you.

11 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Welcome. Great to meet you.

12 >> **TOM TERRY:** Chief to chief. You're the real chief,
13 I'm just --

14 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** I'm not sure about that. We're
15 in your territory today.

16 (Laughter.)

17 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** So I understand that you grew up
18 in Oklahoma and went to University of Oklahoma, and of course
19 that's sort of Tornado Alley. So I want to talk to you a
20 little bit about whether you experienced a tornado growing up
21 or while you were there?

22 >> **TOM TERRY:** I am probably one of the few that you
23 will find that have been doing this for 30 years, I've never
24 seen a tornado in person. We never had one hit my small town
25 of Wellston, Oklahoma. It's outside of Oklahoma City. Only

1 800 people in the whole town. But we would all go -- the
2 whole middle school was built underground.

3 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Wow.

4 >> **TOM TERRY:** So the whole town would literally go to
5 the middle school. That, plus being in college -- back then,
6 you didn't have storm chasers everywhere like you do today.
7 So I've never seen one in person. I've covered plenty
8 though.

9 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** So my daughter and son-in-law
10 lived out there for a while, and I visited occasionally. And
11 once my son-in-law and I were out on a golf course, and I was
12 about to hit a golf ball, and these sirens just started
13 blaring.

14 >> **TOM TERRY:** Mm-hmm.

15 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** And I went -- I didn't know what
16 was happening. I almost fell on the ground. And my
17 son-in-law said, oh, I forgot to tell you. But they're just
18 testing the tornado warning system --

19 >> **TOM TERRY:** Right. Exactly.

20 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** -- out there, which is pretty
21 sophisticated.

22 >> **TOM TERRY:** We had one in our town too. Generally
23 back in the Tornado Alley -- even Dixie Alley, as they call
24 the southern states -- Tornado Alley, much more commonplace
25 to have sirens. Because it's kind of like a part of your

1 spring season to have tornadoes. We don't have them nearly
2 as frequently -- at least the larger kind. The most recent
3 one was back in 2007.

4 So there are a few towns, municipalities, that will have
5 sirens. Otherwise, though, we've kind of transitioned to
6 more apps and weather radio alerts, things like that.

7 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** So growing up in Oklahoma,
8 growing up in that sort of meteorological area with
9 tornadoes, is that what got you interested in meteorology?

10 >> **TOM TERRY:** Oh, absolutely.

11 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** And tell us a little bit about
12 your studies. And did you major in meteorology?

13 >> **TOM TERRY:** Absolutely. Yeah. Growing up in a small
14 town -- I used to watch the meteorologists on TV, and they
15 would get all excited. You know, there's a severe
16 thunderstorm. And there's this new thing called radar.
17 Here's what it looks like. Tornadoes -- we're covering this.
18 So that was kind of in my DNA growing up.

19 I got a weather radio/alarm clock when I was, like, ten,
20 and it would -- you'd hit the button and it would talk to you
21 with the weather radio. And it would -- so I remember
22 going -- tornado somewhere. And I would listen, and I would
23 draw it on the map and go outside and show mom and dad and
24 then run back inside. So I was kind of prewired for that.

25 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Studying that subject matter,

1 tell me, kind of, what is the emphasis? I'm assuming it's
2 science?

3 >> **TOM TERRY:** Lots of math and lots of science.

4 It's -- probably the number one weed-out course when you get
5 into meteorology school, you start with calculus, and there's
6 actually eight semesters of math. I needed about another
7 three classes, and I would have had a bachelor's in math.

8 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Wow.

9 >> **TOM TERRY:** So there's a lot of math. There are -- a
10 lot of the computer models that you see us show on TV,
11 they're just a bunch of big algorithms, big equations, you
12 know, partial motion in the atmosphere, things like that.

13 So you have to learn how all that works. But guess
14 what? When you graduate, unless you go into research or you
15 teach, you don't ever use that stuff anymore. So it's
16 already gone out the left ear.

17 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** And what about your personality
18 and your skill set to communicate so well on TV, did you know
19 you had that when you decided to major in that subject or
20 does that come along as you're studying?

21 >> **TOM TERRY:** I think it comes along over a period of
22 time. My very first time doing a recording back when I was
23 in college was horrible. You know, wouldn't hire me in a
24 thousand years.

25 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** My first trial wasn't so great

1 either. But go ahead.

2 >> **TOM TERRY:** So we all start -- I think you have to
3 have a certain knack for it. You have to have a certain
4 communication ability. And it's interesting you mention that
5 because people ask me, would I want to go to work for the
6 weather service, things like that, not that I couldn't
7 fiscally go and work for a weather service if they would hire
8 me, but I love the broadcasting side. I love the
9 storytelling, the relating to people, the -- I love that, I
10 think, as much -- probably 60/40 over the weather side.

11 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Great.

12 So we talked a little bit about tornadoes. Maybe we can
13 talk about tornadoes in our locale, and then, of course,
14 we're gonna talk about hurricanes, especially in light of
15 what's recently happened.

16 What kind of tornado threat exists in Central Florida?

17 >> **TOM TERRY:** Well, we actually have a lot of tornadoes
18 here per capita. It depends on how you kind of parse the
19 data. But a lot of ours are very small. They're little
20 waterspouts. We recently had a landspout that did damage
21 over in the Rockledge area. That was about a week and a half
22 ago or so.

23 But rarely do we have these large tornadoes that you
24 would commonly see back in the Midwest and Tornado Alley.

25 But during the -- what we call the dry season, the

1 wintertime season, predominately in February, we -- and in an
2 El Nino cycle, where the storm tracks are farther south, we
3 can actually get all of the similar ingredients over Florida
4 that they get in the Midwest. And the most recent deadly
5 tornado outbreak was 2007, Groundhog's Day morning. We had
6 21 people killed. It was the first time they actually used
7 the Enhanced Fujita scale, the EF scale. That was an EF-3.
8 The one before that we actually had was back in 1998. So
9 that would have been the most deadly outbreak. Forty-two
10 people died then.

11 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** So when people come to Florida,
12 which they do in the thousands, almost every day now, they
13 might be surprised to hear about tornadoes. They might
14 think, well, it's hurricane land in Florida. But tornadoes,
15 maybe that's a surprise to them.

16 Can we switch to talk about hurricanes for a moment?

17 >> **TOM TERRY:** Sure.

18 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** So, of course, we're talking the
19 week of Harvey in Texas and Houston. Maybe you can explain
20 to our viewers, why was so much water dumped on Texas? What
21 came together in terms of the weather that created that?

22 >> **TOM TERRY:** Well, Harvey in itself, it was a big
23 Category 4 hurricane. But that is nothing new to the Gulf of
24 Mexico: Katrina, Rita, Ivan, all these big storms. So --
25 what was unusual, though, about Harvey was the fact that we

1 had a big area of high pressure that simply blocked the
2 motion of this storm, so it just slowly meandered and stalled
3 near the coast.

4 So if it weren't for that, we probably would have had a
5 big hurricane hit south Texas. We may have had, say, 8 to 12
6 inches of rain, and it would have been on its way. But it
7 sat there for five days.

8 And this was a very well-forecasted storm. Our forecast
9 models even showed the potential of 50 inches of rain.

10 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Wow.

11 >> **TOM TERRY:** We had 52. So it was very well
12 forecasted. But it's a one-in-a-thousand-year statistical
13 event. It doesn't mean you're going to have to wait another
14 thousand years to get it. Just -- that means overall, only
15 once in a thousand years would you get a storm like that to
16 happen.

17 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** If -- what would happen to
18 Central Florida if we got rain in a hurricane anywhere near
19 the capacity that they got in Houston?

20 >> **TOM TERRY:** Oh, it would be a mess. It would be a
21 mess.

22 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Is that a possibility for us
23 with hurricanes or not?

24 >> **TOM TERRY:** It's possible. You know, something
25 happened back in 2008. We had tropical storm Faye, and we

1 had kind of a no-name -- I call it the no-name storm of 2009.
2 It was a little low in the Gulf. It didn't actually develop.

3 But we got into kind of an outer rainband, similar to
4 what Houston went through as Harvey was slowly approaching
5 from the southwest. And these heavy rainbands are kind of
6 like a train right over the same track, heavy rain, heavy
7 rain, hour after hour. And we had 27 and -- 27 -- yeah, we
8 had back-to-back 27-plus inch rainfall amounts in two
9 different counties in two different years. So it can
10 absolutely happen here.

11 Now, 50 inches, hopefully not. That's our entire annual
12 rainfall. But we would have serious issues. Hopefully,
13 though, we would know in advance. I would think we would,
14 that the storm would have the potential of stalling, they
15 would start letting water out of some waterways. But there's
16 simply no place for that amount of water to go, and
17 especially in five days' time.

18 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Wow. Amazing.

19 One of the things we do at the courthouse is, when
20 tropical storms or hurricanes are forecasted to come to us,
21 we have to decide when -- do we close the courthouse, which
22 is a significant challenge --

23 >> **TOM TERRY:** I'm sure it is.

24 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** -- as you can imagine. So we
25 tend to take our lead from the public school system.

1 Do you communicate with them about -- I imagine they
2 call you and they call the national weather center and they
3 call all kinds of different places.

4 **>> TOM TERRY:** I'm not exactly sure where they get their
5 official information from. Probably from the National
6 Weather Service, but if there is a big enough storm, there
7 will be inland hurricane wind warnings, things like that.
8 And under those circumstances, you know, we just don't want
9 people out of their safe area. So it really comes down to
10 that.

11 **>> CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right.

12 **>> TOM TERRY:** But we've had a few times where the theme
13 parks have closed. I'll get calls from s from different
14 restaurant groups, things like that. Sometimes when they're
15 in the market or out of the market. But we have all of our
16 things that they're doing, and they sometimes, I think, will
17 contact emergency managers --

18 **>> CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right.

19 **>> TOM TERRY:** -- the weather service. They're happy to
20 call me, though.

21 **>> CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** So you might not know this, Tom,
22 but we -- we have a building, the Booking and Release Center.
23 It's out at 33rd Street, and it has a backup generator so
24 that we can have court, even in the middle of a weather
25 emergency --

1 >> **TOM TERRY:** Right.

2 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** -- if we lost power, which we
3 did in -- was it 2004 or 2007? What year --

4 >> **TOM TERRY:** 2004.

5 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** 2004.

6 >> **TOM TERRY:** That would have been Charley. Yeah.
7 Lost power.

8 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** And so that structure has its
9 own power system so that we can operate the courts because
10 there are some events that have to happen every single day.

11 >> **TOM TERRY:** That's right.

12 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Christmas morning, Easter
13 morning, we have judges who are on duty.

14 So we do have that facility. It would be scaled down.
15 It's got cots in it. It's got showers in it so that a judge
16 could hold court in an emergency. Of course, we hope to
17 never have to do that.

18 >> **TOM TERRY:** Right.

19 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** But we do have that.

20 >> **TOM TERRY:** Right.

21 We're the same way. We have a generator. So -- and
22 actually in back in 2004, we brought in another generator
23 just as a backup on a trailer. So we had it ready to go. We
24 have everything here. I will sleep on a floor cot somewhere
25 in between coverage.

1 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right.

2 >> **TOM TERRY:** But that's kind of what we do too.

3 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** But I've seen you on the news --
4 on the weather and on the news for hours and hours on end in
5 an emergency like a hurricane.

6 >> **TOM TERRY:** Absolutely.

7 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** So what's the longest you've
8 ever gone?

9 >> **TOM TERRY:** Twenty-two hours.

10 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Whew. That's --

11 >> **TOM TERRY:** Well, it may have been. During -- during
12 Matthew, I was on for about 22 hours. I probably should not
13 have been on the air for that length of time. But it's like
14 you got to get in the ball game. It's --

15 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** What if Matthew had come closer
16 to landfall and gone right over us?

17 >> **TOM TERRY:** Much, much, much worse. It was a really,
18 really big hurricane. Now, fortunately, before it made its
19 approach to our coast, it went through what's called an
20 eyewall replacement cycle where the eye got physically larger
21 but weaker. So the wind field spread out. So we actually
22 got a little bit more wind along the coast than we might have
23 gotten if it had stayed a tighter storm. But we didn't
24 get -- the winds were not quite as strong. If it would have
25 actually hit the coast, which was forecast --

1 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right.

2 >> **TOM TERRY:** -- to do or get very close, we would have
3 had -- we would still be doing cleanup and recovery of lots
4 of structures. We'd have had a lot more storm surge
5 inundation. But we were prepared. That's the whole keep.
6 You got to get ready. Treat it as if it's going to hit, and
7 hopefully you dodge it.

8 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** So what are your thoughts about
9 we declare, sort of, emergencies. I know -- and then these
10 storms miss us. Are we giving our populous a false sense of
11 security sometimes? How do you balance between "get ready"
12 but then hopefully it doesn't hit you, and that balance
13 between preparing?

14 >> **TOM TERRY:** Yeah. That's -- that's just part of --
15 that's just part of living here where we live, you know?
16 There's always a certain amount of uncertainty that comes
17 with this. And you don't ever want to hope for, oh, gee, I
18 hope that hurricane does hit so that people will know that
19 we're serious.

20 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right. You don't want that.

21 >> **TOM TERRY:** So you just -- you just plan for it. And
22 as long as you've made the proper planning and if it does
23 hit, what's the inverse of that? Well, gee, I wish they
24 would have told us, we would have left.

25 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right. If you can, could you

1 quickly explain to our listeners and our viewers what the
2 different categories of hurricanes are and sort of what they
3 mean, what they should be aware of for those?

4 >> **TOM TERRY:** Yeah. Well, two scientists, Saffir and
5 Simpson, came together years ago and came up with a hurricane
6 scale, and the Saffir-Simpson Scale Category 1 hurricane
7 starting at around 74 miles an hour. And generally about
8 every 20 miles an hour as we work up the scale. We go
9 Category 1, 2, 3, all the way up to 5.

10 So the most intense hurricane to hit recently would have
11 been Harvey. It was a Category 4 that hit along the Gulf
12 Coast. So we're talking winds over 125, 130 miles an hour.
13 So you're talking about, you know, mass storm surge, the
14 winds physically pushing water onshore. That's why we have
15 evacuations is for storm surge. Winds that certainly destroy
16 structures, things like that.

17 So one thing about hurricanes, though, is that you don't
18 necessarily have to have a cat 3, 4, or 5, what we call a
19 major hurricane, to have a lot of destruction like they had
20 with Harvey. If Harvey had only been a tropical storm, it
21 still could have brought 50-plus inches of rain.

22 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Wow. That's amazing.

23 >> **TOM TERRY:** So it's a combination of the wind, the
24 storm surge threat, which is mainly due to categories of a
25 hurricane, and then the flooding, which could come from any

1 size storm.

2 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Our -- if a hurricane comes from
3 the Gulf or the Atlantic, does that change anything? Does it
4 matter?

5 >> **TOM TERRY:** Oh, absolutely.

6 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Tell us a little bit about that.

7 >> **TOM TERRY:** Well, the Gulf of Mexico -- let me just
8 show you on the map back here.

9 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Great. Great.

10 >> **TOM TERRY:** The Gulf of Mexico, very, very warm.
11 This is where the warmest waters are in our part of the
12 world. We're talking about mid-to-upper 80s. And anything
13 over 80 degrees, it's like high-octane fuel for a hurricane.
14 That's why these storms rapidly develop. Katrina was a
15 Category 1, a day later it was a Category 4 or 5.

16 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Because of the warm --

17 >> **TOM TERRY:** Because of the warm waters.

18 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** -- warm water?

19 >> **TOM TERRY:** There's all kinds of warm currents that
20 come through here. The Loop Current comes off of the coast.
21 So there are all these warm water pockets in here called
22 eddies that these storms feed off of to get going. It's like
23 tossing gasoline on a fire.

24 But the Gulf of Mexico, very shallow. So what happens,
25 you'll be blowing these waves and building them up, and

1 there's no way for them to really overturn very well in the
2 Gulf, so they just pile up. That's why when Katrina hit up
3 here in Mississippi, we had 28 feet -- to the top of our
4 studio -- of storm surge.

5 Now, when Matthew hit along our east coast, we had about
6 10 feet along the coast near Jacksonville. The Atlantic is
7 much deeper, so the water can overturn more frequently. It's
8 the way that the shelf rises.

9 So we're much more prone to storm surge for storms in
10 the Gulf. That's why Tampa is at a huge risk of being
11 inundated and flooded out from a storm surge. But I -- I
12 really worry about storms that would hook in, say, from the
13 Gulf this way. Because we're still only 65 miles away.
14 Plus, we could have record storm surge here. Either way,
15 though, it's not a good deal.

16 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right. Right. So what's the
17 hardest part of your job? What's the most enjoyable part of
18 your job? What's the hardest part of your job?

19 >> **TOM TERRY:** Well, I love what I do every day.

20 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** It sounds like it. I can tell
21 you do.

22 >> **TOM TERRY:** You got to love what you do.

23 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right. I agree.

24 >> **TOM TERRY:** I think the two hardest things that I do,
25 number one, is trying to forecast exact weather, which is

1 impossible, for, like, a large outdoor event. Tom, we've got
2 a big outdoor wedding. It's gonna be two weeks from
3 Saturday. Keep the weather nice. Okay.

4 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** They blame you, right?

5 >> **TOM TERRY:** That's hard.

6 The other thing that's hard to do is tornado coverage.
7 And it's not actually locating tornadoes and tracking them.
8 That's not very hard. It's trying to juggle the programming
9 side of things because it's Final Jeopardy night, and here's
10 a tornado. So we have a public service that we have to do.
11 But 99.98 percent of the people are being impacted, they want
12 to watch Final Jeopardy.

13 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Interesting.

14 >> **TOM TERRY:** So it's interesting. But we have
15 different avenues. We have our sister station, TV 27. We
16 have Facebook. We have online. So we have ways to, you
17 know, say, take a commercial break, show you what's going on
18 with the storm, keep you informed, and then kind of do a
19 little bit more coverage later. If you're impacted, you can
20 tune over.

21 But that's a lot of juggling to do. That's probably the
22 single-hardest thing that I do. And people think that I just
23 want to get on TV. No. I do that enough. Trust me. I
24 don't want to interrupt your show.

25 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** So how -- you mentioned earlier,

1 but how long have you been doing this?

2 >> **TOM TERRY:** I had my first internship 29 years ago.
3 So I've been on TV 26.

4 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** So 29 -- 26 years on TV -- 29
5 years in the industry -- later, what advice would you give to
6 someone who's interested in your field as they're about to
7 enter it or thinking about it in the future, that's what I'd
8 like to do?

9 >> **TOM TERRY:** You know, our industry is changing so
10 fast. Back when I first started, you had the four major
11 networks, and cable was kind of in its infancy. The Weather
12 Channel had just started, and CNN had just started. Now
13 there are a bazillion channels, and there are all kinds of
14 social media outlets.

15 So there's a lot more competition for the eyeballs of
16 the viewers. So just make sure that you kind of are able to
17 pivot to whatever is next. That's why, you know, I always
18 try to embrace whatever the new thing is, Facebook, and
19 Facebook Live, and Instagram and all these-type things. But
20 it's interesting. There are always gonna be a need for
21 people like us to keep you safe in the event of a storm.

22 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right. Informed.

23 >> **TOM TERRY:** So it's just a challenge. But you have
24 to pivot to what's new.

25 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** So, Tom, about every day, 50

1 percent of the time when I'm in a hearing, somebody thinks
2 I'm brilliant and someone thinks I'm an idiot. Somebody's
3 satisfied with my ruling, somebody's unhappy with my ruling.
4 How much criticism do you take if you ever call a weather
5 event incorrectly? Do people --

6 >> **TOM TERRY:** Well --

7 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** -- communicate with you on the
8 social media and say --

9 >> **TOM TERRY:** -- I get -- I get a few comments, you
10 know? But I think a lot of folks -- we've done a good job
11 educating the public about the uncertainty that goes along
12 with forecasting. It's gotten a lot better. You go back 30
13 years ago, and it was scattered showers, high of 92. Okay?
14 We're trying to pinpoint, it's gonna be near Orlando between
15 4:00 and 5:00. So we get much more detailed. But, you know,
16 all these computer programs, I mean, they're only -- there's
17 only so much data. There's all this chaotic motion. So we
18 get it pretty good.

19 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** That's a great segue into
20 technology.

21 >> **TOM TERRY:** Mm-hmm.

22 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** I'm fascinated by your
23 technology. I'm not sure I know it or understand it. If you
24 could -- I don't know if you can demonstrate any of it. Can
25 you talk for a little bit about how technology has changed

1 your profession and industry --

2 >> **TOM TERRY:** Oh, yeah.

3 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** -- and what you've got here?

4 Because I'm just looking at your monitor here, and it's
5 amazing and it looks fascinating.

6 >> **TOM TERRY:** We get lots of satellites up here, don't
7 we?

8 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** We do, yeah -- you do. I mean,
9 it looks great.

10 >> **TOM TERRY:** We used to have a great big antenna, like
11 satellite dish, on our roof that would get all of our weather
12 data. Now it all comes through a cloud service or it comes
13 in through the internet. But we get all kinds of satellite
14 data. Our brand-new GOES-16 satellite that just went into
15 orbit has four times the resolution. And it really does some
16 good stuff.

17 So we have all this coming into our box. If you've ever
18 used PowerPoint, it's essentially like a weather PowerPoint,
19 you create little slides, you put them in order, and I have
20 my magic clicker that we will use. I'll stand at my magic
21 green wall and just kind of click through my show.

22 But really the big change in the last -- since I've been
23 doing this -- has been the computers and the forecast
24 modeling that goes on. The models have gotten much more
25 efficient, much more high-resolution. So a combination of

1 real-time data from satellites and radar and all of our
2 sensors, to the computer horsepower that takes this data and
3 turns it into a forecast for the future, has gotten much,
4 much better.

5 Now, the European model, we talk a lot about the
6 European and the American GFS. The European model is, still,
7 I think, a better model overall. The Americans are trying to
8 play catch-up on it. It's a big competition between the
9 countries.

10 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** That's interesting.

11 >> **TOM TERRY:** Yeah. But it all comes to -- it all
12 comes into our boxes. So it's a lot.

13 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Is there any message that's the
14 hardest message to get out to the public about weather and
15 weather events?

16 >> **TOM TERRY:** I think just making sure that they know
17 the serious nature, you know, what can happen. And it's very
18 tough because we talked about this earlier where, you know,
19 if we get mandatory evacuations, you know, people -- you do
20 that a couple times over, say, a lifetime of someone living
21 along the coast, they're like, eh, I survived this, I
22 survived that. It didn't do this. But, you know, every
23 storm is different.

24 They say that Katrina -- Camille, rather, in '69 in the
25 Gulf, killed more people from Katrina because people survived

1 Camille in '69 and did not evacuate during Katrina, and
2 therefore were inundated.

3 So just trying to make sure people know that they need
4 to take care of themselves.

5 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** So maybe we can end with this
6 question, which I think is a controversial one, and I heard
7 it a little bit -- a little bit of debate on the news this
8 morning. And that is whether global warming has had any
9 impact on Harvey. Was it responsible for Harvey? Might we
10 have more weather events in the future? Is that something
11 you have an opinion on -- about that you can talk about?

12 >> **TOM TERRY:** First and foremost, the world is getting
13 warmer.

14 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Okay.

15 >> **TOM TERRY:** It just is. And it has been for decades.
16 We're pretty sure that it's all mostly manmade. That's kind
17 of the consensus for anyone who's pretty serious about the
18 subject.

19 Now, one particular storm, would we not have had Harvey
20 had the world not warmed a little bit? Absolutely not.
21 Harvey would have formed either way.

22 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Okay.

23 >> **TOM TERRY:** We also had a very dry, early start to
24 the year. So the waters in the Gulf are perhaps a little
25 hotter. Maybe that slightly tuned up because of global

1 warming, but probably not. We've had big storms in the Gulf.
2 Harvey was mainly due to the fact that we had a blocking
3 ridge that kept it from moving.

4 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Okay.

5 >> **TOM TERRY:** So -- but, however, I do think that the
6 world is all in balance. That's why we have weather in the
7 first place, trying to take things that are unequal and make
8 them equal again. And sometimes you get problems.

9 So the more you start turning the weather dials and
10 making this hotter, this cooler, you start changing the
11 harmonic balance of things. And I think that's what's been
12 going on across the globe.

13 So I do expect to see more of these aberrant storms.
14 We'll also go through periods of time -- we went through
15 almost 12 years without a major hurricane hitting the U.S.

16 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Unbelievable.

17 >> **TOM TERRY:** So we will go through these extreme
18 cycles.

19 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right.

20 >> **TOM TERRY:** So I think we'll continue to see more
21 of --

22 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** I said we'd end with that, but
23 if I could --

24 >> **TOM TERRY:** Sure.

25 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** -- is there -- I think on the

1 way here, and when I got here, you told me there's a tropical
2 storm forming, Irma --

3 >> **TOM TERRY:** Mm-hmm.

4 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** -- if I have the name right, and
5 correct me if I don't.

6 >> **TOM TERRY:** That's right.

7 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Why don't you tell our viewers
8 and listeners a little bit about it. And then we can end
9 with --

10 >> **TOM TERRY:** Show my map on the computer here.

11 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Maybe that.

12 Great.

13 >> **TOM TERRY:** Now, this is very early. This will have
14 changed by the time people see this.

15 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Right.

16 >> **TOM TERRY:** But it's generally gonna keep moving to
17 the west. The big question is, usually storms in September
18 and August come off the coast of Africa. They make a long
19 journey. And usually they come over here and they turn.

20 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Okay.

21 >> **TOM TERRY:** We get a cold front that will start
22 torquing this, and it turns around.

23 Every so often, though, if we don't have that turning
24 mechanism, these will keep moving west. Sometimes they move
25 to here. Other times they kind of thread the needle. And

1 they can be big storms. There's a lot of warm waters. All
2 these waters have been cooking all summer along. They're
3 extremely warm. So we will always be watching not only Irma,
4 but Jose would be the next storm named. We could easily have
5 another half-dozen storms before the season's over.

6 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** Tom, I want to thank you so
7 much.

8 >> **TOM TERRY:** Pleasure, Chief.

9 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** I didn't know the weather was so
10 complicated. I'm fascinated by the fact that you virtually
11 are a math major and a science major.

12 >> **TOM TERRY:** But I've forgotten most of that. My son,
13 he's -- he's gonna be smarter than I am in math. But, trust
14 me, if you want to get into meteorology, the first question
15 you ask yourself, are you good in math? If you're not, then
16 go to something else. You can always study the weather
17 though.

18 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** It's not like you just stand up
19 in front of a camera and start talking, you have to have that
20 scientific background.

21 >> **TOM TERRY:** That's right.

22 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** And I think the listeners
23 certainly are -- would be intrigued by that.

24 You've been a delight. This is probably my most
25 enjoyable podcast. This was so much fun.

1 >> **TOM TERRY:** Come on back. We'll talk some more.

2 >> **CHIEF JUDGE LAUTEN:** I will. Thank you so very much.

3 I appreciate it.

4 >> **TOM TERRY:** Pleasure. Pleasure.

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12 (Music.)

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