

9TH UNPLUGGED

HONORABLE ELIZABETH GIBSON

ORANGE COUNTY JUDGE

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HOSTED BY: HONORABLE ALICIA L. LATIMORE

JUDGE LATIMORE: Hi, I'm Judge Latimore.

JUDGE GIBSON: Hi, I'm Judge Gibson.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And welcome to 9th Unplugged.

(Music)

JUDGE LATIMORE: So Judge Gibson, thank you so much for being here with me today. Would you please tell our audience your assignment and your experience on the bench?

JUDGE GIBSON: Absolutely. Thank you for having me. I'm very excited to be here. I'm currently a county judge assigned to a criminal division. I've been a judge for about two years and I've been assigned to criminal divisions the entire time, although one of those years was at the jail.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay. And now, we're going to get unplugged. So when you're not being a county judge at the jail or in criminal, what are you doing? What do you do mostly for fun?

JUDGE GIBSON: I have two adorable rescue pups, Chloe and Jack.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Nice.

JUDGE GIBSON: And I love spending time with them, water sports with them, everything I can do with Chloe and Jack.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay, and so what are their breeds?

JUDGE GIBSON: So they're both some kind of terrier mixes because they're rescues, we don't know exactly.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yeah, I have a rescue and they told me he was a poodle and I'm saying there's something else mixed in there too but –

JUDGE GIBSON: Right. Definitely, something mixed in.

JUDGE LATIMORE: General idea. General idea what they are, right.

JUDGE GIBSON: Chloe, we think is a terrier Shih Tzu mix and Jack is a terrier Corgi mix.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Now, how did you get water rescue involved with them?

JUDGE GIBSON: Oh, well, so I spent my whole life afraid of dogs, and my friends actually rescued Chloe and I would go over to their house and Chloe would follow me around the house and sit under my chair. She one time jumped off their dock and swam to me on a boat to come and get her. So, you know, she just sort of adopted me. So Chloe changed my mind. I'm no longer afraid of dogs. She adopted me. And actually, I say Chloe rescued me.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yes.

JUDGE GIBSON: And then I realized that she needed a friend because as you know we work full time, right, so I didn't want her home alone all the time. So I found Jack at a local rescue. He had been surrendered to a shelter and he – both of them had a bit of a rough start but now I think they're living their best lives.

JUDGE LATIMORE: I bet they are. I bet they absolutely are. So before you became a judge, what type of jobs did you hold?

JUDGE GIBSON: So I've done all kinds of things. As a lawyer, I started in the courtroom. I was a prosecutor for almost eight years. I got out of that and went to work for

Orlando Health, Advent Health, a mid-size non-profit so I did lots of in-house corporate compliance, privacy work, all kinds of things like that.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Anything that you've done that was not legal?

JUDGE GIBSON: Well, actually, right after I graduated from law school, I worked on Capitol Hill for my Congressman. But my very first job, I was a bagger at Publix in Oviedo.

JUDGE LATIMORE: I was working for Publix as my first – well, it wasn't my very first job. I was at Wendy's doing fries for a minute, but other than that –

JUDGE GIBSON: Oh, Publix was my third. I was a bagger.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay. Did you enjoy that?

JUDGE GIBSON: No tipping, please.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Right.

JUDGE GIBSON: Carry out is complimentary.

JUDGE LATIMORE: You are absolutely a pro at that, right.

JUDGE GIBSON: That's right. Actually, my mom still has my Publix apron.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Really.

JUDGE GIBSON: She reminds me of that every couple of months.

JUDGE LATIMORE: She didn't have to return that. That's not petit theft or anything like that.

JUDGE GIBSON: No, we didn't have to return it.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, okay, just want to make sure.

JUDGE GIBSON: No, ma'am. No, ma'am.

JUDGE LATIMORE: So I understand you speak a language other than English.

JUDGE GIBSON: (spoke Japanese) I speak Japanese.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Wow, how did you learn that?

JUDGE GIBSON: Well, my dad was in the Navy so I grew up moving all over the world.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

JUDGE GIBSON: And I actually attended college in Japan. I lived there for three years.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, wow. Have you been back since college?

JUDGE GIBSON: No, ma'am.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Would you like to go back?

JUDGE GIBSON: Oh, absolutely.

JUDGE LATIMORE: I bet.

JUDGE GIBSON: I loved it. I had such a blast in Japan. It was wonderful.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay, tell me why you believe it to be so wonderful.

JUDGE GIBSON: I first loved the fact that other than just sort of basic human rights and decency, we don't really have anything in common with Asian cultures. I don't. As you can see it, obviously, the listeners can't, I'm pretty Scottish/Irish. That's my heritage. So European, very different from Asia. And so everything was new. Everything was an adventure and I loved that.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

JUDGE GIBSON: It was fun.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Did you like the cuisine as well?

JUDGE GIBSON: Oh, yes, I love some sushi and raw fish.

JUDGE LATIMORE: There you go. All right. That's great. So I wanted to know what it is that you do when you are home away, you and your dogs, of course, and you're just going to plan a great weekend away and what would that entail?

JUDGE GIBSON: So I – I have a boat, and I love hanging out on my boat with my friends. So we take the rescue pups. When we're on the boat, he's Captain Jack, by the way, not just Jack.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, absolutely, you have to have a captain.

JUDGE GIBSON: Right, we have to have a captain. So we take the pups, we go out on the water, we swim, we surf, we hang out. It's a really great time, friends and family, just getting away from it all.

JUDGE LATIMORE: That sounds fun.

JUDGE GIBSON: And there's something about being in the middle of the lake, even though it's just a lake, and you're still right in Orlando, it feels like you kind of got away a little bit.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay. All right.

JUDGE GIBSON: So I love that.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yeah, that's great. Do you travel?

JUDGE GIBSON: Well, you know, pre-COVID, absolutely.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yeah.

JUDGE GIBSON: But I haven't since COVID actually.

JUDGE LATIMORE: You have not since COVID.

JUDGE GIBSON: No, ma'am.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Where is your favorite place to travel?

JUDGE GIBSON: Wow that is a tough question. Again, I think I love almost every place I've ever been. I like new things. I think life should be an adventure, and so anything I can do that's an adventure, I'm in. I will say this, the older I get, the more I see the value in going somewhere where I speak the language because you know it just makes it easier if you know, oh, this sign means bathroom, or here's the exit.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yes.

JUDGE GIBSON: So I do like that. I think a couple of years ago I went to Ireland and Scotland and it's the first time I've been there so it's my family's heritage but I had never been back – been back. I had never been there so we're you know, my whole family for a couple of generations has been American, so I had never been there. And that was really fun. And if I didn't open my mouth, no one there knew that I wasn't one of them.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yes.

JUDGE GIBSON: So that was different.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Now, were you – where were you born?

JUDGE GIBSON: Oklahoma.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, you've got a lot of stuff going on, don't you?

JUDGE GIBSON: My dad was in the Navy so I've lived in Alaska, California, Oklahoma, Texas, Virginia, Florida, Maryland, North Carolina, and Japan.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, wow.

JUDGE GIBSON: All over.

JUDGE LATIMORE: That is awesome. Let me ask you a question. What are some of the personal rules that you would never break?

JUDGE GIBSON: My personal rules?

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yes.

JUDGE GIBSON: Oh, I don't know. That's a tough one. I think that – this is going to sound really trite because I'm a judge. But I don't – I would never break the law. I don't like cheating or – I'm a very rule follower so that's kind of one of my personal ones. Personal rules. I think also just being kind to people. I think that's really important.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

JUDGE GIBSON: So I try to do that in everything.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Tell me, what is something that you would never do again?

JUDGE GIBSON: Oh...

JUDGE LATIMORE: Is there anything that you've experienced – you've been around a lot of places and a lot of experiences. Is there something you would never do again or somewhere you would never go again, how about that?

JUDGE GIBSON: I hate to say never, but maybe the closest thing is, we joined the polar bear club when I was a kid and we lived in Alaska. You know, it's where you get in freezing water, we had to jump in and swim to another dock and get out. I was in, I think 5th or 6th grade at the time. I don't know if I have that in me to do it again.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yeah, you know...

JUDGE GIBSON: That's pretty brutal.

JUDGE LATIMORE: I'm over here shaking my head like absolutely no. Born and raised in Miami, Florida, I'm all about heat and that would not be something I would want --

JUDGE GIBSON: Yeah, no, there was no heat. I'm telling you, my body hit that water and I froze.

JUDGE LATIMORE: I bet.

JUDGE GIBSON: I don't know if I have that in me now.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Is that – could you call DCF on that one because –

JUDGE GIBSON: Well, my dad dove in with me and he's the only reason I survived because he shoveled me up because he clearly could see that my body was not moving.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

JUDGE GIBSON: It was fun.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Tell us, what inspires you to be better?

JUDGE GIBSON: My dad. My dad is my hero. He was a – he served his country with honor and distinction his whole life and he taught us that our greatest calling is to serve others. And so every day I try to do something to be better than I was the day before because in my head that honors my father and his sacrifices.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Did you ever consider going into the service?

JUDGE GIBSON: Oh, yes, ma'am. I actually volunteered – I didn't volunteer. I interned with the JAG Corp when I was in law school for a summer.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

JUDGE GIBSON: And I almost did it. And my dad talked me out of it. He didn't want me to do it.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yeah.

JUDGE GIBSON: But I almost did it.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Well, it's been wonderful being unplugged with you. Thank you for joining me today.

JUDGE GIBSON: Thank you so much for having me.

(Music)