

9<sup>TH</sup> UNPLUGGED

HONORABLE BOB LEBLANC

CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE

AUGUST 2, 2021

HOSTED BY: HONORABLE ALICIA L. LATIMORE

JUDGE LATIMORE: Hi, I'm Judge Latimore.

JUDGE LEBLANC: Hi, I'm Judge Bob LeBlanc.

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

(Music)

JUDGE LATIMORE: So before we get unplugged, can you tell us Judge LeBlanc what is the division that you're presiding over and what type of cases are you hearing?

JUDGE LEBLANC: I'm in the criminal division and I've got death penalty cases, murder cases, possession cases, all levels of crime.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And how long have you been a judge?

JUDGE LEBLANC: I'm in my 15<sup>th</sup> year, which seems impossible.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Wonderful. Well, we're glad to have you on 9<sup>th</sup> Unplugged as our first judge. So thank you for joining us.

JUDGE LEBLANC: Thank you for having me. I didn't realize I was the first.

JUDGE LATIMORE: So what's really special about your job? What is it that you would tell the audience is the most special aspect of being a judge?

JUDGE LEBLANC: Personally, the most aspect to me is just having the ability to have a positive impact on someone's life, regardless of what decision you make, someone is going to be happy and someone is going to be sad, generally. But you have the ability to have a positive impact on someone's life. I've never lost sight of that.

JUDGE LATIMORE: That's awesome. So let's get unplugged. So what do you do when you're not at the job helping people in their lives?

JUDGE LEBLANC: I read a lot of books. I watch a lot of what I think are interesting series. I like to go home and have a glass of wine with my wife every night and we talk over dinner.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Any kind of favorite wine, any favorite wine you suggest?

JUDGE LEBLANC: I like a heavy dry Italian red, and a heavy dry French white.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Nice.

JUDGE LEBLANC: Like a Chablis and a Chateauneuf-du-Pape which is French or a Barolo, which is Italian.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Do you speak more than one language?

JUDGE LEBLANC: I grew up speaking French. I went to kindergarten, first, and second grade in French schools in Canada, and then we moved to the U.S. and I started third grade in English and speaking totally English.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Do you visit Canada often?

JUDGE LEBLANC: Not since the COVID, but all my aunts and uncles and grandparents were all still in Canada. My dad was the only one that came to the U.S. He was transferred because of a job.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay, and what is it that you miss most about Canada?

JUDGE LEBLANC: My family.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, is there anything particular about Canada and the culture that you really wish that you could have more access to or more experience with?

JUDGE LEBLANC: Canada does not have the same extremes that the U.S. has. The U.S. seems to have become very extreme left and extreme right and Canada is much more mid-left and mid-right.

JUDGE LATIMORE: So what did you do as your first job?

JUDGE LEBLANC: Oh, assistant at some construction site.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yeah. So were you picking up heavy blocks of concrete or...

JUDGE LEBLANC: Picking up – it was a restaurant that was being renovated. I was sixteen, or fifteen, I think. They hired me even though they weren't supposed. It was cash under the table and yeah, cleaning up heavy equipment.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Making a way, right.

JUDGE LEBLANC: Making the whole restaurant new.

JUDGE LATIMORE: There you go. So have you ever been interested in going into construction or any type of area with building?

JUDGE LEBLANC: No.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Architecture.

JUDGE LEBLANC: No. No, no, no, I have --

JUDGE LATIMORE: You always knew you wanted to go into law.

JUDGE LEBLANC: No, I had no idea I wanted to go into law. I worked for six years for an insurance company in Boston before law school, and I was working – it was the home office of a British insurance company. And after six years, I was bored out of my mind and I said to my wife one day. I must have been watching Boston Legal or some show, or L.A. Law, and I just said to my wife, I think I'm suited for law school. I think I want to go to law school. And she's like okay.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Nice. All right, and so when you and your wife get together, what do you do for fun?

JUDGE LEBLANC: Well, we like to find interesting restaurants. We love to have friends and family over for dinner. We go to fewer restaurants than we used to, not just because of the pandemic, but we find that if we cook a decent meal, friends and family will just stick around and it's not a 45 or one hour in and out. It's three or four hours at our house, you know getting to know each other, figuring out life's problems.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Right. Over a good meal, you could always have good fellowship, right.

JUDGE LEBLANC: Yeah, yes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Invite my family, we'll be there.

JUDGE LEBLANC: I will.

JUDGE LATIMORE: So what is your favorite dish? Do you cook yourself?

JUDGE LEBLANC: Mostly my wife cooks. We had an agreement 40 years ago when we moved in together she cooks and I clean.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Nice.

JUDGE LEBLANC: So she cooks fabulous meals. Even though when I post food on social media, half the people think that I've cooked it which gets at her, but really she cooks for the most part, and I clean.

JUDGE LATIMORE: So you mentioned you like to watch movies. Do you like to watch a lot of movies? What is the last movie or series that you binged on?

JUDGE LEBLANC: Sweet Tooth on Netflix.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And what is that about?

JUDGE LEBLANC: It's a post-pandemic world where during the pandemic human babies were born with some animal features.

JUDGE LATIMORE: I did hear about that.

JUDGE LEBLANC: And it's fascinating. In fact, I've seen every episode twice and I can't wait for the next season.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Well, that's the next one I'm going to binge on. I did hear about that. I'm glad to hear from you that's it's –

JUDGE LEBLANC: The second episode will catch you and you'll just want to watch it straight. I watched all episodes in one day.

JUDGE LATIMORE: What is the title of your current stage in life, your current chapter? What is the title?

JUDGE LEBLANC: Semi-retired. Because I'm not retired yet. No, I mean, I'm 64, I still consider myself active and young and I don't see myself as an old person although about four or five years ago everyone started calling me sir. And I thought, okay, so you're starting to look like a senior.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Must be getting there.

JUDGE LEBLANC: Right.

JUDGE LATIMORE: What is the hardest lesson you've learned?

JUDGE LEBLANC: That there are particular days when you don't have – where you have a lack of humility and it slaps you in the face.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Nice. Nice.

JUDGE LEBLANC: Always got to remember to have a sense of humility about you.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yes. Always have to be reminded of that. Do you have a side hustle?

JUDGE LEBLANC: I would like to do pottery.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Pottery.

JUDGE LEBLANC: Um-hum.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Have you done that before?

JUDGE LEBLANC: No, but I would like to do pottery or hypertufa, you know, where they make things – you learn how to make things out of concrete. You’ll see them like at Leu Gardens or in gardenscapes where they’ve just made these huge concrete vessels, and Leu Gardens here actually has hypertufa lessons.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Are you planning to do that when you actually are retired?

JUDGE LEBLANC: Yeah.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Something to –

JUDGE LEBLANC: I want to make a bunch of vessels for our house in Maine.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Now, I understand that you do a little DJ’ing, maybe, is that true?

JUDGE LEBLANC: I was DJ Rufus on WPRK, which is the student station at Rollins College for five years. During the pandemic they closed it down, so I decided I’ve reached my five year goal and I decided to retire DJ Rufus and it was called Stuck in the Eighties or Thereabouts, which really means I got to play whatever the heck I wanted to.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

JUDGE LEBLANC: Mostly Eighties but thereabouts allowed me to you know...

JUDGE LATIMORE: So that’s the music you listen to in your car when you’re driving around.

JUDGE LEBLANC: A lot of eighties, Smith Echo and the Bunnymen, just a lot of – Dacour, just a lot of eighties. Believe it or not, I’m a secret fan, I hope this doesn’t get recorded publicly but I’m a secret fan of Celine Dion.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh.

JUDGE LEBLANC: Which nobody would necessarily guess about me. But she's a fellow Canadian.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay. All right. And a wonderful vocalist.

JUDGE LEBLANC: And a wonderful voice.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Absolutely.

JUDGE LEBLANC: But some people make fun of me because it's so unlike the other music I listen to.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay. All right. And if you had some advice for the younger generation, those who call you sir, what advice would you give them right now?

JUDGE LEBLANC: Stop calling me sir.

JUDGE LATIMORE: There you go.

JUDGE LEBLANC: No, I think it's a sign of respect so to me, they're being respectful when they do it. My advice to a younger generation is even though you can't always be yourself, you should know yourself and be honest with yourself. You might want to jump up and scream in a courtroom and you can't. So you should always know yourself and be honest with yourself even if you can't always be yourself.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay. That's good. So if you had a chance to speak with anyone, any person, living or not, who would that be?

JUDGE LEBLANC: Oh boy, I've got so many favorite authors. It probably would be a foreign leader at some point in the past. I have an affinity for things Chinese. I've been to China. I have all sorts of Chinese things in my house. I probably wouldn't mind meeting Mao Zedong.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yes.



JUDGE LEBLANC: Chairman Mao.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And what would you want to talk to him about exactly?

JUDGE LEBLANC: I'd probably want to tell him what a liar he was and how all those millions of people were fooled into supporting him.

JUDGE LATIMORE: I'm sure he'd look forward to that conversation with you. And if there's anything that you would take with you right now to help plan for your future retirement, so you know, what would that be?

JUDGE LEBLANC: Oh, a million dollars.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, absolutely. And if you had a million dollars, or more than a million dollars, okay, let's say just to do with what you want, what would you do? Not to keep it, not to pay bills, what would you do with it?

JUDGE LEBLANC: My wife and I don't have any children but we have eleven nieces and nephews so we like to think that we'll leave something for them. And I went to a boarding school in Boston for high school and I definitely want to leave something. They were -- just an incredible experience growing up. I got a fantastic education. It gave me the backbone that I have. And I definitely want to leave a legacy for them.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Well, it's been wonderful being unplugged with you. Thank you so much.

JUDGE LEBLANC: Thank you very much for having me.

(Music)