

9TH UNPLUGGED

HONORABLE ERIC J. NETCHER

CIRUIT COURT JUDGE

MARCH 13, 2024

HOSTED BY: HONORABLE ALICIA L. LATIMORE

JUDGE LATIMORE: Hi, I'm Judge Latimore.

JUDGE NETCHER: And I'm Judge Netcher.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And you are listening to 9th Unplugged.

(Music)

JUDGE LATIMORE: Welcome, Judge Netcher, to 9th Unplugged. We are so happy to have you here with us today.

JUDGE NETCHER: Thank you for having me. It's a pleasure.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And would you share with our audience what your current assignment is and what duties are involved in your position?

JUDGE NETCHER: Sure, I'm currently assigned to a civil division, Civil Division 40. I'm a circuit judge and we handle all matter of civil claims with an amount in controversy greater than \$50,000.

JUDGE NETCHER: All right, and so with that, is that something that was part of your area of practice before you came to the bench?

JUDGE NETCHER: It was. I was a civil litigator, focused on appeals, appellate work. I was board certified in appellate practice so it's nice to be home. I started in a family law division which I actually grew to cherish, but it is nice to be home with some familiarity with the substance.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Well, thank you for sharing us with what your day-to-day job entails, but let's find out what you do when you get unplugged and leave the courthouse. And so with that, where are you originally from?

JUDGE NETCHER: I was born and raised in Jacksonville so I'm a native Floridian and I grew up in Jacksonville the entirety of my life. Lived in the same house my whole life until I went off to college in Gainesville. And my dad still lives in that house, so ...

JUDGE LATIMORE: Wonderful. That is beautiful. Must have lots of memories.

JUDGE NETCHER: Yes, plenty – plenty of memories. Shared a room with my brother the entire 18 years so that's always an interesting challenge –

JUDGE LATIMORE: Tell me some of the things that you all would get into since you were sharing a room all of that time.

JUDGE NETCHER: Well, you know, we were friends for the most part. We didn't have a lot of difficulties with one another and I think that level of interaction, you just don't know anything different, you know.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yes.

JUDGE NETCHER: I was always, if I went to a friend's house and they had their own room, I was like oh, my goodness, you have your own room.

JUDGE LATIMORE: What's that like?

JUDGE NETCHER: And your siblings are here. But you know it was just a product of space but you don't know what you don't know and so for me it was just normal and I think it built some level of patience --

JUDGE LATIMORE: Wonderful.

JUDGE NETCHER: -- that can benefit you on the bench.

JUDGE LATIMORE: A lot of fun. You guys were good kids. You didn't climb out the window in the middle of the night or anything like that?

JUDGE NETCHER: Not that I'm willing to disclose, certainly.

JUDGE LATIMORE: We are being recorded. Very wise of you, sir. So I understand that you are a double Gator and you are a big UF fan, correct?

JUDGE NETCHER: I am. I'm a double Gator. I really didn't want to go to any other university and it was a tremendous – I was there with two football championships and two basketball championships. It was a good time to be a Gator when I was around.

JUDGE LATIMORE: That does sound exciting. Now, I understand you had a side job while you were in college.

JUDGE NETCHER: I've had multiple side jobs, but one I suspect you're referring to is familiar to what we're doing now, which is I was a DJ in undergrad, a radio DJ. I started out with the – it was a rock station, WRUF FM, Gainesville, Ocala, Rock 104 and we – I started out with the overnight shift, so 2 a.m. to 6 a.m. and I would do that –

JUDGE LATIMORE: While you were in school.

JUDGE NETCHER: A couple times a week. I do recall one time I had an exam at 9 a.m. and I was working 2 a.m. to 6 a.m., studying, studying, studying. I get off work, do a little more studying, take the exam at 9 a.m., go home and just pass out.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yes.

JUDGE NETCHER: For whatever reason I'd just jump up at like 1 p.m. and I think oh, my goodness, I missed the exam. I totally had forgotten that I had taken the exam.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, yes you did that in your sleep apparently. And I'm guessing you aced it. I would suspect that you did.

JUDGE NETCHER: Perhaps, but DJing was a fun gig and I did that all throughout undergrad and even started to do it when I was still in law school but then they changed formats.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Now, how did you get into DJing?

JUDGE NETCHER: Well, it's interesting. I started out at UF, my undergraduate was in advertising and then I switched to public relations and ultimately to political science which is what my degree is in. That and a minor in history, but the advertising and public relations are in the college of journalism and communications. And that is where the radio station is located. And I recall seeing an ad and I said this sounds like a cool gig and wound up getting the job. It was – it was a good way to be able to learn a unique area, telecommunications, make a little money but also be able to study while I'm working.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Now, do you venture back to that every once in a while when you have a party at the house, or getting together with the friends?

JUDGE NETCHER: No, I don't know, I think I've hung up my headphones as they say but you know, it's not something I return to but – except for now so here I am.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Here you are. Yes, we can switch seats.

JUDGE NETCHER: Yeah, exactly.

JUDGE LATIMORE: You'd probably do a great job in this seat right here. I understand that you are a history buff, is that correct?

JUDGE NETCHER: Yep, I enjoy history, all things history from ancient to modern. I enjoy it for multiple reasons because I think it gives us – obviously there’s a lot we can learn from history, but also it gives us a lot of perspective. I mean, there’s just a lot of crazy things that have happened in our past, a lot of atrocious things that have happened in the past. And you read about these things and you just think for a moment how fortunate we are and blessed we are to be in this time and this moment. And so if I’m having difficulty with a lawyer or maybe the Wi-Fi is not working that great, you take a step back and say well, wait a minute, you know I’m not in the potato –

JUDGE LATIMORE: You could be using the chisel and stone, right?

JUDGE NETCHER: Yeah, so we’re – it brings some perspective and so I just – I find it all fascinating.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Now, do you read a lot of history even now?

JUDGE NETCHER: I do. I still do. I wish you know I wish I could read – I used to read a bunch. I don’t read as much now primarily because I’m running around the house with my two and-a-half-year old which is great. I wouldn’t trade that for the world, but I still read a fair amount. I usually go back and forth, I’ll read a nonfiction followed by a fiction and keep it fresh.

JUDGE LATIMORE: What do you believe is the greatest lesson you’ve learned through reading history over the years?

JUDGE NETCHER: Oh, that’s a tremendous question. The greatest lesson that I have learned, I think it goes back to this component of perspective which is kind of just appreciating what you have now in the moment and not worrying about the next job, the next opportunity because, you know I don’t want to sound too big picture here but you know, existence is a

miracle in and of itself. You know, the mere you know fact that we're sitting here talking with each other, looking around, it's all very crazy if you take a step back and think about it. And so understanding and appreciating what other people have experienced brings you some measure of I would say again perspective about your own – about your own time.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Absolutely. I think that's great and a great way to look at it all and I want to get into just some of the things that you might do when you're away from work that really is fun. And I understand that you married your sweetheart, your high school sweetheart, is that correct?

JUDGE NETCHER: That's correct. She – we – she was born and raised in Puerto Rico, moved to Virginia but made it –

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, she cooks really well.

JUDGE NETCHER: Oh, gosh, yeah, rice, beans, arroz con gandules.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yes.

JUDGE NETCHER: All of the fun, good stuff.

JUDGE LATIMORE: I'm gaining weight just listening to you right now.

JUDGE NETCHER: Yeah, no, it's tremendous. And we met in Jacksonville in high school. And she actually went to UCF. I went to UF and so we had planned to break up but I haven't found a reason yet, so maybe one day I will but not –

JUDGE LATIMORE: And I don't think you will.

JUDGE NETCHER: I don't think it's coming so –

JUDGE LATIMORE: I don't think so.

JUDGE NETCHER: And she went to UCF. She got her Ph.D. in environmental engineering and so she's the real brains of the operation. We're both sort of workaholics so we've got to reign ourselves in sometimes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

JUDGE NETCHER: But our two and-a-half-year old does a really good job of that for us.

JUDGE LATIMORE: I'm sure. I'm sure. That will pull you away. So what do you do when you take a moment and break away from the job and go have fun?

JUDGE NETCHER: Sure, well now it's all him all the time, our son which is great and we're loving that. Days gone by, we enjoy the theater, we go to Orlando Shakes or the Dr. Phillips. We like – we love the beach so we're beach people and try to make it out to the beach as much as possible.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Any travel plans to go out of the state or out of the country?

JUDGE NETCHER: Not presently. We did just go to Colorado; it was our first trip with the little one –

JUDGE LATIMORE: With the little one.

JUDGE NETCHER: We went out to Breckenridge. My wife had a work trip out there so I tagged along and then we went to Breckenridge for a week and we really enjoyed – we do love to travel, eating, like we love to eat and experience sort of – experience various different places.

JUDGE LATIMORE: So what is your favorite cuisine?

JUDGE NETCHER: That's a real tough one. If we're eating at home, I'm going to go Puerto Rican because I gotta – I gotta – you know –

JUDGE LATIMORE: You got to be safe.

JUDGE NETCHER: I gotta make sure my wife is happy with my answer there but rice, beans at home. If we're going out, I do love some Italian, you know and chips and salsa, some Mexican does me every time too.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right. Well, you gave a great answer and she won't find a reason to break up with you any time soon, I'm sure. Thank you so much for being unplugged with us today.

JUDGE NETCHER: Thank you so much for having me.