

9TH UNPLUGGED

HONORABLE CHRISTINE ARENDAS

OSCEOLA COUNTY JUDGE

MARCH 2, 2022

HOSTED BY: HONORABLE ALICIA L. LATIMORE

JUDGE LATIMORE: Hi, I'm Judge Latimore.

JUDGE ARENDAS: And I'm Judge Arendas.

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

(Music)

JUDGE LATIMORE: So before we get unplugged, let's tell everyone or let's have you tell everyone what is your position and how long you've been there.

JUDGE ARENDAS: So I am an Osceola County Judge. I was elected in 2018, took the bench in January of 2019. Served in county criminal until June of 2021 and then they shut down that division, created a new civil division and so my current home is county civil in Osceola.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And what do you enjoy most about your job or your position?

JUDGE ARENDAS: We really get to deal with a lot of different people. Get to see different problems, try to help them come up with some solutions and just giving back to the community. It's a service-oriented job and I'm a service-oriented person so it's the best of both worlds all the way around.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Wonderful. So when you get unplugged, you know, who do you spend most of your time with and what do you spend most of your time doing?

JUDGE ARENDAS: Most of my time is spent with my family, of course. My children have gotten much older so they're not really around much anymore.

JUDGE LATIMORE: How old are they?

JUDGE ARENDAS: She will be 24 in March and he will 20 in June. He's the only one at home right now. So she's already moved out and spread her wings and just doing her thing. But I like to spend time with my husband, believe it or not. Some people don't but I do. I love spending time with my husband. We have great times together. Get to do wonderful things.

JUDGE LATIMORE: What do you do with your husband most of the time?

JUDGE ARENDAS: So when we're actually out doing things, we like to go kayaking. He's a – he's a nature person and I love nature, I love the water, but I wouldn't call myself a hunter or anything like that. As a matter of fact, I don't believe that match.com would ever put us together. We're two totally different people.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Opposites attract.

JUDGE ARENDAS: Absolutely. And they have certainly attracted here. You know, he's country. I'm definitely not. I grew up in the country, but those days are long behind me so I wouldn't class myself – classify myself as country anymore. But we like to be outdoors. I like to travel. He is okay with travelling but it's not like he wants to go international or anything.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Where do you want to go?

JUDGE ARENDAS: Oh, I want to go to all kinds of places. So I've never been to Paris. I want to go there. I'd love to go to Italy and Greece, but there's also a lot in the United States that I haven't seen that I would love to see. And he's been to 48 of the states. I've been to, I don't know, maybe 20.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Which states are left that he has to go to?

JUDGE ARENDAS: Hawaii and Alaska.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, those are two nice states.

JUDGE ARENDAS: Yes, so I'm going to make both of them happen in the very, very near future.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yeah. So where did you grow up?

JUDGE ARENDAS: So I was born in Massachusetts. A lot of people don't know that. Yes, I'm a New Englander, but I was only there for two years and then I went to Kentucky. And I was in Kentucky from age two to age nine, henceforth the country growing up. Horses, chickens, the whole nine yards, played outside in the woods all the time. And then at age nine I came to Florida. So I'm a solid transplant is what I tell people.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yes. That's what you call it?

JUDGE ARENDAS: Yes, yes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

JUDGE ARENDAS: Deeply rooted.

JUDGE LATIMORE: That's your story and you're sticking to it.

JUDGE ARENDAS: Yes, and I'm not leaving.

JUDGE LATIMORE: I don't blame you. I love Florida Too. So do you live kind of like the farm life, country style life here in Osceola?

JUDGE ARENDAS: Not really. Not so much for me. My husband does. Again, the opposites attract so he's out in the woods all the time. He worked with Fish and Wildlife and that was like really the best job ever for him.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

JUDGE ARENDAS: But not me so much. Like, I'm a beach girl. I love being on the water. I love you know like taking walks at the lakefront.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Nice.

JUDGE ARENDAS: Theme parking. Love theme parking.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Do you all have pets?

JUDGE ARENDAS: We used to. So we had a bloodhound who unfortunately left us during COVID.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, bummer.

JUDGE ARENDAS: Yes, so to make that year even worse. And then we had a 16-year-old boxer-pit who left us last December.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Oh, I'm sorry.

JUDGE ARENDAS: So we are currently pet free which is weird because we've always had pets.

JUDGE LATIMORE: I heard you had a pet pig at one time.

JUDGE ARENDAS: I don't know that I would call her a pet pig. There's an interesting story that relates to this pig.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Does she have a name?

JUDGE ARENDAS: Her name was Luna.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

JUDGE ARENDAS: My daughter named her Luna. And so the story goes like this. My husband's working on one of the ranches. And he hears something, and he's not sure what it is. So he goes to investigate. And there's this little bitty, bitty pig and I wish people could see right now because it's not much bigger than my hand, okay.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

JUDGE ARENDAS: And he brings it home and I said to him, what are you going to do with that. And he goes, well, it depends. I'm like that's a lawyer answer. You're not allowed to do that. I'm like, what are you doing with this pig? And he goes, well, if it lives, I'm going to eat it. I'm like, what? He goes, yeah, we're going to raise it, and then I'm going to eat it.

JUDGE LATIMORE: That was the idea from the very beginning for your husband.

JUDGE ARENDAS: That was his idea.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

JUDGE ARENDAS: And so everybody tried to change that idea. Our neighbor went and got the pig a Harley Davidson collar and told my husband, look, she's been named, she has a collar, she's a pet, you can't eat her now. And he's like, I'm going to eat this pig. And so when she got to a ripe old weight of I guess about 59, 60 pounds, he did the deed.

JUDGE LATIMORE: And so Luna is no more.

JUDGE ARENDAS: No, no, no, no.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Rest in peace.

JUDGE ARENDAS: Luna was repurposed.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Repurposed.

JUDGE ARENDAS: Yes. And Luna was put into our freezer and my husband was threatened with an end of his life that I was not to be provided any of Luna.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Now for all the PETA people who are listening out there, listen, we repurpose things for good purposes, all right.

JUDGE ARENDAS: Yes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right, so please forgive us. But anyway, so ask your husband not to bring home anymore pet pigs.

JUDGE ARENDAS: I have because I had to bottle feed this pet pig and I had to look into her eyes with her long eyelashes and he's like, well, you eat pork and I said, but that pork comes from Publix. It doesn't come from my backyard.

JUDGE LATIMORE: With a label.

JUDGE ARENDAS: Yes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: That's true.

JUDGE ARENDAS: So –

JUDGE LATIMORE: So if you had not been a judge, what is it that you would have loved to do for a profession?

JUDGE ARENDAS: I don't know that I can answer that because I've wanted to be a judge since I was nine.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

JUDGE ARENDAS: So like what I'm doing now is what I've always wanted to do.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Now, how did that come into your mind to say at the age of nine I want to be a judge?

JUDGE ARENDAS: You know, I think it was life circumstances at the time. So I told you I came to Florida when I was nine. That was a divorce with mom and my stepdad and I had three stepsisters and two half-brothers of that marriage. And I don't know. That's what was going on in life. And when people would ask me, what do you want to do. And I'm like I want to be judge.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

JUDGE ARENDAS: And you know I used to watch Judge Wapner and who was one of the greats. I don't particularly care for all of the dramatic ones that are on TV now but –

JUDGE LATIMORE: I understand.

JUDGE ARENDAS: It's so people can watch, so...

JUDGE LATIMORE: Yeah, I understand. So let me ask you this. Would you pick beef or fish, seafood?

JUDGE ARENDAS: Fish.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Fish, definitely, okay. So vegetables or starch?

JUDGE ARENDAS: Oh, I love me some carbs. I will eat beans and rice every day of the week if you let me.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Would you?

JUDGE ARENDAS: Yes.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Well, we had a guest on here who makes some awesome beans so we'll follow up that with you, okay.

JUDGE ARENDAS: Yeah, put me in contact.

JUDGE LATIMORE: All right, sounds good. Okay, and when you're talking about music, R&B or jazz.

JUDGE ARENDAS: So I like a lot of different music. I like jazz. I like Andrea Bocelli, some Gianni, but the thing that surprises people the most is I love hip-hop.

JUDGE LATIMORE: You do.

JUDGE ARENDAS: I do. I love hip-hop, and I am not a country music person at all.

JUDGE LATIMORE: So who's your favorite hip hop artist?

JUDGE ARENDAS: Oh, so I love me some Pitbull, and Doja Cat. The Super Bowl this past Sunday, incredible show. I will not –

JUDGE LATIMORE: The halftime show.

JUDGE ARENDAS: -- say it was the best halftime show but I will say it was definitely up there in the top five.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Okay.

JUDGE ARENDAS: Just you know Snoop dog, and Dr. Dray, it was incredible.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Nice.

JUDGE ARENDAS: Yeah.

JUDGE LATIMORE: So we got to get together and do some hip hop together.

JUDGE ARENDAS: Yes, ma'am.

JUDGE LATIMORE: Well, thank you so much for being unplugged with me.

JUDGE ARENDAS: Thank you for having me. It's been wonderful.

(Music)