**The Good Judge-ment Podcast**

**Trying the Big Case**

**Judge Jim Bodiford**

**September 14, 2023**

**WADE: Hi folks, and welcome to another episode of this here program we like to call “The Good Judge-ment Podcast”. I’m your host, Wade Padgett.**

**TAIN: And, as always, I am your designated survivor host (in the bunker), Tain Kell.**

**WADE: Today we have a different kind of show for you- but just as awesome as usual- right, Tain?**

**TAIN: Yes, Wade, the quality of the programming never wavers here at The Good Judge-ment Podcast!**

**Today in the studio we have a special guest, Judge Jim Bodiford, senior judge in the Superior Court of Georgia.**

**Wade, I dare say that Judge Bodiford- Jim- has tried some of the most high profile cases in Georgia trial history.**

**No doubt about it! Jim, welcome to the Good Judge-ment Podcast.**

**[APPLAUSE SOUNDER]**

**[JIM ACKNOWLEGES HIS INTRO]**

**Jim, let’s get right to it. As we said, you have truly tried some of the highest profile cases in Georgia trial history. Let’s give our audience an idea of some of those. You tried the Fred Tokars murder trial. You handled the Tri-state Crematory case, tried the Lynn Turner “Black Widow” murder case, and, probably most famously, tried the Brian Nichols murder case, among others.**

**First, let’s talk about what it is like to be assigned a high profile case. As a judge, what are some of the myriad issues for you to confront:**

**JIM:**

**Press**

**Public pressures**

**Security**

**Other threats**

**Delays/timing**

**High profile attorneys**

**Venue issues**

**Other caseload to manage**

**Brian Nichols**

**Let’s talk about some of those individual cases you have tried. First, Brian Nichols. I think, arguably one of the most complicated trial situations I can imagine.**

**For our listeners who might be too young to remember that case, briefly recap the facts of the case.**

**Let’s be honest, when you took over that case mid-stream, that case was, at best bogged down, at worst, a mess. Talk about the situation you inherited.**

**JIM: Procedural posture**

**Effort to “right the ship”**

**Short trial timeline**

**That case had the additional pressure of involving the murder of a fellow Superior Court judge. That increases scrutiny, too, right?**

**I know that case involved extraordinary security measures- especially concerning the defendant. Talk about that.**

**You were a senior judge, right? At least that freed up some time for you, but what about the cases you tried while you had a caseload to keep up with?**

**That case generated worldwide press. What was it like managing the press during trial?**

**Was there any consideration of gag orders or anything like that?**

**That was a death penalty case, too? What does that add to the mix as a judge?**

**Anything else unique occur during Nichols?**

**Fred Tokars**

**Let’s talk about another trial you handled, the Fred Tokars murder trial. Again, for those who might not remember that one, it involved the shotgun murder of the wife of a well-known Atlanta attorney, Fred Tokars, in Cobb County. The murder took place in front of Tokars’ young children. Tokars, who was involved in some shady dealings, paid a middleman, Eddie Lawrence, to find a hitman, Curtis Rowe, to kill Tokars’ wife.**

**That was also a death penalty case, right?**

**There was a change of venue in that case, too, wasn’t there? Talk about that.**

**Was that a sequestered jury? Key West Inn in Walker County?**

**I know there was an unusual motion for mistrial in that one involving Court TV’s decision not to show Eddie Lawrence’s face, right?**

He was going to be in the Federal witness protection program?

**What was the press like in that one?**

**How and when did you decide to move that trial to another county?**

**What were the considerations?**

**Were there jury protection considerations?**

**Did the children testify? What were the considerations?**

**Lynn Turner**

**So let’s talk about the Lynn Turner “Black Widow” murder trial. That one was particularly high profile due to press fascination with the facts.**

**Let’s talk about the facts:**

Turner poisoned her husband, a Cobb police officer, with antifreeze, collected his life insurance and pension.

Turner poisoned boyfriend, a Forsyth firefighter, with antifreeze, collects his life insurance.

Two trials- Cobb, then Forsyth

Both death penalty?

**Ultimately, after trying to find an impartial jury in Cobb, you moved that trial to Houston County, right?**

**How do you try a case outside your jurisdiction?**

**What was the press coverage like?**

TV shows (CSI, Oprah network)

**What else was unusual about that case?**

**High-powered lawyers?**

One is now a respected jurist?

**How do you keep the external “noise” from affecting the case?**

**Tri-state Crematory case**

**Facts:**

**Ray Brent Marsh took over the Tri-state Crematory from his father. Later it was discovered that 339 bodies were never cremated and families were given concrete dust and ashes instead of remains. Bodies on premises of crematory.**

**Case did not go to trial; plea bargain and civil settlement?**

**There was a simultaneous Georgia civil case and a Tennessee criminal indictment and a federal case, correct? How do you handle that? Any coordination?**

**Massive international press coverage, right?**

**Gag orders?**

**Lots of victims. How do you accommodate that?**

**Wrap Up**

**Any parting advice for a judge out there who may be listening, anticipating a big, high-profile case?**

**Don’t forget the Good Judge-ment Podcast episodes dealing with Rule 22, open courtrooms and Judicial Canons.**

**That is all we have for this episode of the Good Judge-ment Podcast. Thanks to our special guest Judge Jim Bodiford for his input and sharing his considerable experience with us.**

**Thanks Jim!**

**Reach out to us at** [**goodjudgepod@gmail.com**](mailto:goodjudgepod@gmail.com) **and be sure to like and follow us on your favorite podcast platform.**

**You can also find us on LinkedIn!**

**TRIVIA**

Today’s music trivia excursion takes us away from individual bands or even genres. Instead, today we are talking women in music. Not a specific artist but women in general. Random questions involving women in pop music.

Lady Gaga (a/k/a Stefani Joanne Angelina Germanotta) got her stage name “given” to her based upon a song from a very famous band. Any clue?

**The band, Queen, The song, *Radio GaGa.***

Taylor Swift’s first album was the self-titled, “Taylor Swift.” What year did that album come out? Hint, Taylor is 33 years old (will be 34 on 12/13/2023). Give up on what year her first album was released?

**2006 (dang we are getting old)**

Multiple Choice! Switch up.

What music video featured Madonna sailing from the canals of Venice? You remember the video. So was that the video for the song *Justify my love, Live to Tell, Papa don’t Preach, Holiday, Like a Virgin?*

***Like a Virgin***

Finally, name the first woman ever inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame? Tina Turner, Aretha Frankin, Mama Cass Elliott, or Stevie Nicks?

**Aretha! No doubt!**