

CWM Audio 2

Arthur (Art) Concello Interview, January 13, 1973

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Part 2

Art: Turn the show over to you and you operate it and entertain all the soldiers and all these people. You turn it back to us in A1 shape when you turn it back to us. We'll furnish you the people to operate the show and what have you. We turn it over to you. You do what you want. Which I thought was a hell of a good idea because you couldn't get anything.

[00:00:30] Anyway, they told him to go jump in the river. They fired him in forty-two. This is the end of forty-two. This all happened ...

Interviewer: It really evolved in the forty-three season I guess.

Art: This happened January 1st of forty-three. Their wrestling back and forth the month of December and January. This is all happening in December and January of forty-three. He's fired. At this point I'm fired. They said, "Oh, hell we don't really do ..." However, I furnish all the acts. I got a contract for all the acts for forty-two.

[00:01:00]

Interviewer: Let's touch on one point there. Earlier, you were furnishing just the fly act. And, now when did you start furnishing everything?

Art: Oh, I furnished the flying acts, three flying acts. I furnished a couple of aerial bar acts. I had a diving thing or a comedy dive and they dove into a net.

[00:01:30]

Interviewer: You're still doing that same thing, right?

Art: Yeah I'm doing this-

Interviewer: You're not hiring all ... you're not the agents for all the acts?

Art: No, I got about 10 or 15 gals that do webs and little girl numbers and cloud swings. I'm furnishing a whole 10 or 12 acts around this show. Aerial stuff, aerial bars, flying acts, girl acts, double traps and all that, all the aerial stuff. I had nothing to do with the acts.

[00:02:00]

Interviewer: Earlier, Hamlet had been agent for a lot of that stuff.

Art: No, a guy named Badini.

Interviewer: Oh yeah, right.

Art: Alberto Badini. Alberto Badini was a guy that furnished most of this stuff. Pat Volvo went to Europe and got a lot of this stuff, but his man was John's man: a guy named

[00:02:30] Alberto Badini. He got the acts together in the European space.

Anyway, the end of forty-two, in December, January 1st I'm fired. I'm with the show and what have you. I ain't got nothing to do with it. I got the acts there and what have you.

Interviewer: You actually were on the show?

[00:03:00]

Art: Yeah, well I wasn't on all the time. I was off and on, off and on. I wasn't working in the act. I furnished 30 people or 40 -- whatever I had lined up for the show. I said "Okay,

[00:03:30] fine." This is forty-two and I'm off and on the show in forty-two. Forty-three comes along, I buy a thing called Russell Brothers'.

Interviewer: Well, let's dwell on that one a minute. Claude and Pauline Webb, Claude's not feeling too well, he's got some in-laws and outlaws running the show for him and they start to look around for a buyer. And, as I recall, it was Jake Newman that maybe Pauline Webb contacted, and she thought maybe he could get Zack Terro interested in this.

[00:04:00]

Art: Yup.

Interviewer: Instead, he figured he had a better idea, and he contacted you. There's a couple of stories there that may be legend and may be fact, but one is did you see the show before you bought it?

[00:04:30]

Art: Yeah. I had seen the Russell show off and on. Oh, four or five times I had seen the show.

Interviewer: That was a pretty nice show on that time.

Art: Yup, then I went to the coast at this point. I talked to Jake and Jake said, "Hey, the Dressell show is for sale, and Webb is sick." I say, "Well, I'll go look at it." I had a guy drive me, called Red Larkin, and we drove out to coast and I looked the show over at the lot in Los Angeles, looked it over two or three times I said, "What do you want for it?"

[00:05:00] He said, "I'll take 50 Gs as is, where is." I just said, "You pay all the present bills, I don't want to be liable for any bills or any tax bills." I bought the show in forty-three, around forty-three.

Interviewer: When you opened it, now you opened the season with it-

Art: No, I bought it right after though.

Interviewer: All right, it's on the road then.

Art: Yup, it was right at Los Angeles and then it was leaving when I bought it right.

[00:05:30]

Interviewer: You rented or leased the title from Webb in a separate deal.

Art: No, I had an agreement with Webb, I could use the title.

Interviewer: Oh, all right.

Art: I said, "I'll buy the show, I'm buying the title in good will and what have you. Physical assets and the title." That's all right. That wasn't in the sales contract, but I had a letter from him later on and she says you didn't buy the title.

[00:06:00]

Interviewer: Oh, I see. That got to be an argument.

Art: She says, "I don't want to sell the title." I say, "Go screw yourself get another buyer." [C. W. 00:06:09] give me a letter that I bought the Russell Brothers' title. Shit, I said, "I may use it a year, I may use it two years I may use it five. I don't know. If I ain't using it, shit, I'll give it to you it. I don't give a god damn about Russell Lovett." Anyway, I bought that run up the coast in forty-three.

[00:06:30]

Interviewer: Going up the coast now is another one of these legends that's following you around, how fast did you get that money back?

Art: Immediately.

Interviewer: Like how, a few days, a few weeks, business was good in those years?

Art: Yeah, when I went up I bought up the show and run up the cost, I paid 50 Gs for the show and run it up to Spokane and I had all my money back and a lot more.

[00:07:00]

Interviewer: Again, there's one of these legends. Did Red Larkin load up some of that and take it back Webb?

[00:07:30]

Art: No, I paid Webb with a check for 35 ... I said, "No." He said, "Give me 50." I said, "I'll give you 50." I give him a check for 35,000 dollars. I said, "I owe you 15,000 when I see everything you say. I want to see that everything's right and another thing is I don't want to wake up and find out that you owe 10 or 15 thousand dollars' worth of bills. As soon as I see this thing is right I'll give Millsap here the lawyer 15. If you want in escrow, that's all right, but I'll pay you 15 when you show me that this Russell Brothers' ain't got a lot of goddamn bills and ain't got no tax bills.

[00:08:00]

I think during that particular year, after I had gone up the cost in the fall, I give C. W. his \$15000. I said, "Here's your money now, I can't find any bills. If any turns up, son of bitch you're liable for them, but ahead of that [inaudible 00:08:32]." "You got a deal, you have my word." His word was good too.

[00:08:30]

Interviewer: All right, you got up around Spokane in forty-three. You had a couple of years of opposition with Arthur in that area, but you didn't have it that first year did you? They

weren't there that first year.

Art: I don't think they was that year. The first three we went up there and then run on down run up there and run on down to Denver-

[00:09:00]

Interviewer: In Denver, you closed it then you had some Polio in Oklahoma or something like that maybe.

Art: Yeah, I had an agent called Tuffer and he says, "Hey, things don't look good south." I say,

[00:09:30]

"This thing in forty-three I made a lot of money [inaudible 00:09:20] I made a lot of money." I went to Denver and this thing was costing two grand a day in them days. It was \$80,000 in Denver and it was costing two grand a day. I had just gathered the truck. Right, there was some trouble in forty-three with trucks. Wasn't like [I wanted them 00:09:48]. I had a guy called Sheriff, [Alton Wells 00:09:53]. I says, "Don't say nothing." I

[00:10:00]

wired Tuffer and I said, "Come back here." Tuffer come back, I say, "What are you going to do?" He said, "I'm going to close this thing Sunday night in Denver." "Well now you're going to have to drive this thing." "Sheriff you go down and get me 15 railroad cars." I said, "Set that goddamn thing in Los Angeles." Chuck wasn't like I'm honest put it on the

[00:10:30]

railroad train, took that thing to Los Angeles. In the meantime, I had been to Los Angeles and there was a thing called Lincoln Park Zoo down that way.

I met a guy, [dealed with 00:10:39] a guy. I says, "I want to rent that in winters." He said, "All right." I rent it out, put it in the zoo, and then I had the chance in forty-three, at the end of the year, it was early, all right fix it up. I got it all fixed up whatever I wanted.

[00:11:00]

Interviewer: That idea of moving those trucks on flats was historically, you could find it was done away on back, but you were the first one to do it in that period.

Art: Yeah.

Interviewer: The railroads have any reaction to that? Or did they-

Art: I said, "I want some cars, I've got some trucks here I want to put them on." They said,

[00:11:30]

"Fine." So I made a deal with the railroad and they kicked them right on. This was in forty-three, I took it to Los Angeles and that winter we got it all set. Forty-four, Clive Beatty wired me and says, "Jesus Christ, Art ..." I don't know what. I know he was crying. I said, "You ain't got any problems, come on out. I'll use you." He come out, we sit down

[00:12:00]

and make a deal. I said, "I ain't going to pay you nothing. I'll give you a percentage of the net profit after winter quarters." He said, "All right." Of course, I was friendly with Clyde because Clyde was around the Haggenbeck show in the early years with me. I used to loan him money in the early days, old Clyde.

[00:12:30]

Clyde come out there in forty-four and I think I called in five beating wrestling brothers. Forty-four season we run that thing up the coast and we got to Spokane and get it done real well.

Interviewer: Again, two years in a row now.

Art: We got off in San Diego or some place and run up that coast and you're in Spokane
[00:13:00] about 20 weeks later, you don't have no rain, no mud. I called Tuffer in Seattle and said,
"Hey, what are you going to do in Spokane?" He says, "Dub dub dub dub." I says, "Don't
[00:13:30] give me that bullshit, I tell you what you do. You go to Spokane and we'll close in
Spokane. Get me 20 railroad cars, we'll put this whole god damn thing on there and set
over there now someplace where there's money in Nebraska and we'll go down that
middle west and get that money." He says, "all right." He went on ahead and booked
Grand Rapids right on down to Joplin, Hot Springs in Oklahoma and boom boom boom.
[00:14:00] We closed in Spokane Sunday and I says, "Hey, take five or six days off own next
weekend." I think we took five days off in Grand Island, Nebraska someplace. And, we
went down and business was good all down through, and we closed it up the 1st of
November or something down in Texas.

Interviewer: Okay. That season was as good as the first one with the Russell show?

[00:14:30]

Art: It was twice as good.

Interviewer: That sound like it was real good. You closed it in Texas somewhere.

Art: We wintered, I said hell with it. Just set that thing right there and Tool Tutright says, "Go
get the Los Angeles lot in Washington and hell." [inaudible 00:14:54] I says, "We'll play
[00:15:00] out to it." I think in forty-five, I think I put it on rails in forty-five.

Interviewer: Okay, the Beckman Girdy stop is in Shreveport.

Art: I said, "All right take this crap over to Shreveport, all this God damn junk you got here."

Interviewer: From where, Art?

Art: Oh, we closed over there in some little Texas town in the east Texas area, and I says,
[00:15:30] "Hey, Tuffer get a winter for us." He says, "Hey, Beckman Garrity's got one down in
Shreveport." I says, "Oh, hell that's alright. I'll winter there, too." I talked to Barney and I
said, "Hey, how much you want for the flats?" I bought some flats and coaches and crap
from Barney.

Interviewer: About 15 cars?

[00:16:00]

Art: Fifteen cars. I think we took all them damn trucks, and what I couldn't use I sold. I had a
guy named Wallace Love. I said, "Wallace, sell that crap for anything you can get for it."
He sold it down there.

Interviewer: You kept some Russell trucks and you used some Beckman Garrity wagons.

Art: Yeah, what made sense I kept of the Russel stuff. And, Barney had a lot of crap there, so

[00:16:30] I said all right I want this, this. I picked out how much I want and he made me a deal and I bought it cheap. Then we framed the show and went on.

Interviewer: In that you framed it at-

Art: Shreveport.

Interviewer: Shreveport, and then did you dead-head it to the cost or did you play on the way?

Art: We played [inaudible 00:16:42]

Interviewer: Then you called it Russell Brothers' Pan-Pacific, and you went to the Pan-Pacific Auditorium. What was the value in calling it Pan-Pacific? Was it primarily the Los Angeles area?
[00:17:00]

Art: No, we just wanted a God damn, I think we had Russel Brothers' Clyde Beatty.

Interviewer: Oh, yeah, you had a longer name.

Art: He said, "Well, let's call it Russell Brother's." We seen the boys out there we say, "We're going to call this Pan." The guys that had the building, Henderson brothers. God damn fellow after that [inaudible 00:17:15], anyway he says that's all right, so we called it Russell Brothers' Pan-Pacific. We run that season.

[00:17:30]

Interviewer: Before we get too far ahead now, let's get back to Arthur brothers. When you were up around that Spokane in forty-four-

Art: Forty-four, yup.

Interviewer: You had some pretty rough opposition, day to day opposition kind-of-thing with the Paul Eagles, their agent at that point. And didn't you have some opposition with-

Art: We had some trouble with Arthur Brothers after we got ... I think in them days we played the Los Angeles lot for 24, 25 weeks. In other words we played two or three months around San Diego, Los Angeles, and the area. Well, there was a thing this guy had a little old trap called Arthur Brothers and they run up ahead of us up the coast. We had some trouble with them, this that and the other. I had a guy running the thing they got to fighting him and Arthur. We had some opposition, but I think they run out of money. I don't think he had any money.
[00:18:30]

Interviewer: The army put him off limits, he was running into all kinds of trouble.

Art: Huh?

Interviewer: The army put him off limits for one thing at the time.

Art: Oh, everything. He didn't have any money and they had the grift. We had some trouble,

[00:19:00] but I think they went broke that year up around Spokane or someplace they went broke.

Interviewer: Did you ever hear an idea that Frank Ellis was on Kelly Motor show about a year or so ago. He was a fixer. He was on the Arthur show I guess. Do you recall any incident with him in that opposition, any fighting particularly?

[00:19:30]

Art: Oh, there might have been, but I wasn't mixed up in it. There might have been. I had Red Larkin and all them rough guys around. I suppose they fought and raised hell and moved arrows and did everything else when they got up there. I think our opposition coming for them when we got up in Oregon or Washington. I think up in there and I think [inaudible 00:19:59], they did everything to each other. Backed off and says to... I had McClusky and Kirnima and Bob Reynolds and George Warner and I had good bosses. Shit, I had good bosses. I had organized with good bosses. Shit, I sit down in that car and [inaudible 00:20:23] that dirty bastard, well get your best hold. They had some problems with them up there, however, I think they was able to break them up.

[00:20:00]

[00:20:30]

Interviewer: Okay, then in forty-five we're talking about Pan-Pacific again and again you had Arthur Brothers' and Davy Tablin joined you about that time. He was a partner for a while.

[00:21:00]

Art: Yeah, I sold him a piece of the show. There's your fighting right there. Davy was fighting with them all the time. Don't tell me about it. He was fighting with them and they was writing poison pen letters. Oh, oh, my God, I don't want to hear about it. One time I hear about it, I say, "Christ, I'm making a lot of money here. I don't want to hear, but if they want to fight to hell with him." Davy was a fighter. He run the side show and the program. He was fighting with them, which I wouldn't get into. Eventually I think along about that time... I think they went broke up in there someplace.

[00:21:30]

Interviewer: Yeah, I think they did that second year. Was forty-five as good as forty-three, forty-four?

[00:22:00]

Art: It was three times as good.

Interviewer: Now that's getting pretty big.

Art: It was very good. Forty-five I think we run up and I was laying for Canada. We open the show up and run up the coast and run up. Tuffer took it out to an island called Vancouver Island. Went out there for a week and it was tremendous. Then we run right across Canada. I think we run right across Canada-

[00:22:30]

Interviewer: Wasn't that forty-six?

Art: Maybe it was.

Interviewer: Your figure in Canada was forty-six, according to my recollection, and Beatty was back with you at that point.

Art: Yup, I guess it might have been.

Interviewer: When Beatty came back he had been off with-

Art: [00:23:00] Forty-four closed and Beatty told me, "I don't like that there agent." "What the hell you got to do the agent." He ain't got nothing to do with the back end. Anyways, he says, "I don't like that place." "You don't like him go someplace else." Well, he says, "I'm going to do a show." "All right, Clyde, go ahead. Shit, that's your privilege." I said, "Go ahead. Hell, if you're going to do a show go on." I think he come back East and got mixed up in some kind of God damn thing and lost his ass.

Interviewer: Wallace Brothers.

[00:23:30]

Art: Some kind of a thing he got mixed up with and this, that, and the other. Anyway-

Interviewer: In the meantime you've got the Pan-Pacific show and you're doing well and now in forty-six he comes back to you.

Art: [00:24:00] End of forty-four he says, "I'm going to do a show." I says, "Go ahead." End of forty-four I paid Clyde closing day one hundred and thirty thousand bucks. This is more fucking money than Clyde had ever seen in his whole fucking life. I said, "Go ahead, Clyde. I says, "Shit, do it. Shit, it's a free country." All right he went out and he got something he did something.

Interviewer: That 130, was this year of forty-four?

Art: That was his end-

Interviewer: Of the forty-four season. Yeah, okay. He uses that to buy Wallace Brothers or something.

[00:24:30]

Art: He uses that and says, "I'm going to do a show." I says, "Okay, go ahead." He went out and blowed his ass. Anyway I get a big long wire from Clyde crying in forty-five. He says, "God dammit, I want to do something with you." I said, "All right, Clyde, I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll give you a PC of the show. I'll give you a percentage of the profits. You don't own nothing. I'll give you a percentage of the profits after all costs and winter quarters." I said, "If you want, to come see." So he comes out to the coast to see me. I finally make... I say all right Clyde's a good act. All right we got no problem. "Come on Clyde," I say, "I'll take you back. Now look, the fucking agents up there ahead of the show all the time whether you like him or not."

[00:25:30] Clyde was mixed up with Bill Moore. He wanted him to be ... I said, "You son of a bitch you take Bill Moore's name, not me. Shit, that bastard gets drunk. I might not find him." I said, "This guy Tuffer's a good, reliable, good agent." I said, "Shit, no. I ain't gonna do that." Anyway, he come back in forty-six, and I think we run up the coast and

[00:26:00] run across Canada and run on down to someplace in Texas. Clyde when he come back

[00:26:30] he said, "Look I got the [inaudible 00:26:06] dates in Houston, or someplace down in Texas. And now, Art, God damn I've already signed this contract. Now, you got to realize this. Now, I want to come back and I'm broke and I blowed that dough, but I gotta tell you, I signed that God damn contract in Houston November 6 or sometime in November." I said, "That's all right, Clyde. We can close up the first week of November. That's all right."

Interviewer: That would be for the forty-six season now.

Art: Forty-six season.

Interviewer: In that run across Canada, now you're the first show to get in there after the war. First, let me ask you this: the Canadians never let truck shows in and when you had a rail show you had to put all the trucks on a train you had to get some system flats to move-

[00:27:00]

Art: We had a train.

Interviewer: Yeah, you had the train, but you had some overlying concessions or something.

Art: Put them on the tracks.

Interviewer: Why was that, what was the Canadian deal on that?

Art: That wasn't the reason, the reason was there was no God damn roads across the country in Canada. I just hired a couple of flats. Put like two flats on there and two trucks or whatever it is and put them on there. I run across there with the god damn roads you couldn't get across there. The gravel you wouldn't make it long [trips 00:27:30] 00:27:27]. I just put them on a train and run it across Canada.

Interviewer: You've been telling me about how good the Russell business was and undoubtedly that's accurate, but I think that forty-six has a reputation of being the most sensational season for making money that ever came down to pike. Did it look that way to you?

Art: It was good. It was good.

Interviewer: You were doing three shows, and you were doing turnaways in the rain, you were doing all the earmarks of a great season.

[00:28:00]

Art: We did \$10,000 a day when the fucking show didn't cost \$2.

Interviewer: Yeah, and that was particularly true in Canada.

Art: The coast was the same.

Interviewer: Okay, then you come into the stage at Niagara Falls and you come back to Texas to take care of Clyde's Houston date. Now, in that period, then you sold it didn't you?

[00:28:30]

Art: Yeah I paid-

Interviewer: After seeing that Canadian money I suppose that Clyde thought he was going to be a manager again.

Art: Yeah, Clyde was saying... Clyde says at the end of forty-six, "I want to do a show." I says, [00:29:00] "You don't even got no problem, I'll tell you what I'll do." Clyde is a great guy, I says, "As long as Clyde stays in the back end and behaves himself he's all right, but now he's like I don't like that George Warner." I said, "What the heck, you don't sleep with him. You ain't got nothing to do with him." And, I said "The son of a bitch get a tent up every day and down every day." "Well, I don't like him." Course he had Bill Moore around as his manager. I don't know what for, but he had him around.

Interviewer: All right let's look at that one a minute. Moore comes into this year after year now, what did Moore have on Beatty?

[00:29:30]

Art: Shit, I don't know. I don't know. All I know is he had him around there. I had him around there and he wanted me to [inaudible 00:29:35] with Bill Moore as an agent I said, "Go fuck yourself, Bill Moore ain't going to do nothing for me." I said, "I like Bill to sit down and talk to, but I don't give a ... He sure ain't going to do nothing for me, you know. If he want to do something for you that's different." Anyway he had Bill around there I don't know what the hell he had on him or what the score was. Anyways, I said when Bill was [00:30:00] around the show, I said, "All right, Bill, you're Clyde's catch here you mine as well do a little fixing, which probably cost me money in the long run. Anyway, Bill fixing around the show and kept a share so deputies off your neck for tickets and all that. Anyway, had him around there, that's all I know. And at the end in forty-six, the show closed in forty-six and this time I go to New York. [00:30:30]

Interviewer: Now you sold the show.

Art: No. No, the show closed in November forty-six. I go to New York, and I get a call from John North and John North says, "Come on in here to New York. I want to talk to you." [00:31:00] At this point he says, "We're going to get the show back." I say, "That's good." We're going to get the show back. So I say, "That's good." "You gotta loan me some money." I say, "What do you need?"