

## CWM Audio 75

### Rudy Bundy Self-Recording, circa 1980

#### TRANSCRIPT

Rudy Bundy: This Rudy Bundy. I'm trying to recall some of the things happened with Ringling Brothers Circus. I'm doing this for Tony and Carol Conway, good friends of Katie and ours. I just talked to them on the phone. I'm here in Sarasota, and this is April the 9th.

In 1957, we did not play under canvas. As you know, we closed July 16th, 1956 in Pittsburgh. We came back to Sarasota to winter quarters. We had a menagerie there, and we had people come in to see the animals and the circus wagons and so forth. Anyway, we opened up at Madison Square Garden April the 3rd, 1957. We went from there to Boston Gardens, then to Providence, Rochester New York, Hershey Pennsylvania, Portsmouth Virginia, Raleigh North Carolina, Charlotte North Carolina, and West Salem, and Richmond Virginia. We played a stadium there the Victory Stadium. And we went to Roanoke. That was the Victory Stadium, I guess.

And Baltimore, Washington DC, Springfield, Philadelphia, Albany New York, Syracuse New York, Columbus Ohio, Youngstown Ohio, and Toronto Canada, Denver Colorado, Pomona Fair in California, and Sacramento California, Oakland California, San Francisco, San Diego California, Los Angeles, Phoenix Arizona. Then we went into Albuquerque, El Paso Texas, Lubbock Texas, Waco Texas, Dallas Texas, San Antone Texas, Mexico City. That's when we went to Mexico City and played for a month at a building in Mexico City. Then we came back and played Shreveport Louisiana, Little Rock Arkansas, Nashville Tennessee, Montgomery Alabama, Tampa Florida, and we closed in Miami Florida February the 16th. That would be ... We went over into 1958.

So now we're at '58, this year, we opened in Charlotte North Carolina, the coliseum. Then we went into New York City, Madison Square Garden. We played Boston, Boston Gardens. Then Providence, Hershey, Philadelphia, Norfolk, Richmond, Baltimore Maryland, Washington DC, Youngstown Ohio, Johnstown Pennsylvania, Columbus Ohio, Cincinnati Ohio, Knoxville Tennessee, Chattanooga Tennessee, Louisville Kentucky, Atlanta Georgia, Birmingham Alabama, Memphis Tennessee, Fort Smith Arkansas, Oklahoma City Oklahoma, Topeka Kansas. I remember that day. Boy it sure rained. We were in a ballpark then, in fact.

And Omaha Nebraska, Denver, Colorado, Salt Lake City Utah. Then we went back to the fair in Pomona California. Then we went to San Francisco. And from there, Sacramento, Oakland, San Diego, Los Angeles. And then we went to Mexico. Now this time, we wanted to play buildings, but we had a little trouble with the other circuses in Mexico. They kept us out of the building in Mexico City. So we had to play bull rings. We played Juarez. We played Torrance, Monterrey, Guadalajara, Leon Mexico. And we closed in Pueblo Mexico, December the 21st. That trip was not very good for

the circus. When we didn't play the buildings, we had to play bull rings. It wasn't successful, let's put it.

Now, in 1959, this year we opened in Miami Beach, January 23rd. Went on to Montgomery Alabama, Shreveport Louisiana, Nashville Tennessee, Huntington West Virginia, Charleston West Virginia, Charlotte North Carolina, Winston-Salem North Carolina, Greenville South Carolina, Raleigh North Carolina. Then we went into Madison Square Garden in New York City. We opened there March the 27th, 1959. We closed May the 10th.

Then we went into New Haven Connecticut. Then we went to Boston Gardens. From there, Rochester New York, Detroit Michigan, Toledo Ohio, Chicago Illinois, St. Paul Minnesota, Indianapolis Indiana, Knoxville Tennessee, and Atlanta Georgia. And then, the show was off. We started to take some time off in the summer. We closed Atlanta July the 12th.

And we opened in Davenport Iowa, August the 9th. We played there, and then we went to Des Moines, Milwaukee Wisconsin, Hutchinson Kansas, Denver Colorado, and Oakland California. Now from there, we went to San Francisco, San Diego, Long Beach California, Los Angeles, Albuquerque New Mexico, Lubbock Texas, San Angelo Texas, Dallas Texas, Tulsa Oklahoma, Little Rock Arkansas, Birmingham Alabama, Louisville Kentucky. And that year, '59, we closed in Cleveland Ohio, November the 29th. By the way, we were doing pretty good then. Our gross for that year was close to four and a half million dollars, which wasn't too bad.

Now, we go into 1960. We've then, getting ready or moved down to Venice Florida, from Sarasota. Anyway, we opened 1960 season January the 25th. We went to Miami Beach for that. Then we jumped to Montgomery Alabama, Columbus Georgia, Nashville Tennessee, Greenville South Carolina, Winston-Salem North Carolina, Raleigh North Carolina, Huntington West Virginia, Charleston West Virginia, Greensboro North Carolina, Charlotte North Carolina, Haddonfield New Jersey, right across from Philadelphia. Then we went into Philadelphia Pennsylvania. Then we went into New York City. We played the Garden from March the 31st through May the 15th. Then we jumped to Boston, to the Garden. And then we went to New Haven Connecticut, Hershey Pennsylvania, Chicago Illinois, Troy Ohio, Fort Wayne Indiana, Toledo Ohio, Evansville Indiana, Atlanta Georgia.

Now, this is when Ringling Brothers went back on rails. The '57, '58, '59 season, and the part of 1960, we were what you call a truck show. And so, we went on rails in 15 cars, to be exact. We closed June the 30th in Atlanta Georgia. And then, we took the train out of Sarasota, 15 cars, and we opened August the 5th in Omaha Nebraska. We went from there to Denver Colorado, and then Salt Lake City, San Francisco, Oakland California.

And we went to Oakland and played three days, and then back to the Cow Palace, San Francisco. Then we went on to Fresno, San Bernardino, Los Angeles, San Diego California, Dallas Texas, Ardmore Oklahoma, Owensboro Kentucky, Louisville

Kentucky, Detroit Michigan, Milwaukee Wisconsin, Green Bay Wisconsin, Waterloo Iowa.

I remember that was a date that my old friend [Luschinski 00:10:41] had. He sent one of his boys out there. It wasn't too good a date. I told the boy, I think this was Gary Luschinski that he really had his Waterloo there. But anyway, because I can see here that we were there only two days. But we took in about \$11,000. That is not very good for Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey.

We went from Waterloo to Des Moines. Then Cleveland, Ohio. And we closed in Birmingham, Alabama, November the 22nd. That takes care of the 1960 season. And our gross was well over \$4 million that year.

Now, I might say that we had promoters doing our dates. In '57, that's when the Feld brothers came in. They were contacted by Harry Dube. A lot of the talk was that John Ringling North got ahold of the Feld brothers and wanted them to come in and help him out. Well, this is not really the case. Harry Dube got ahold of the Feld brothers. That's when that started. In '57, I think the only date that the Feld brothers had in a building, I think was down in Winston-Salem, because they'd been sending some rock shows or something in there, so they kind of had that building so they could get in.

The rest of the dates they had in '57 were ballparks. We even played the ballpark in Columbus, Ohio. And the one right outside of Youngstown, at Canfield, Ohio. Anyway, that takes care of that. Luschinski's, they called theirs circus shows. I'll go into that a little bit later on this tape. But the Felds went under Super Shows. That was their trade name for doing the shows for Ringling Brothers. And Martel Brett from Birmingham, who only wanted four or five dates anyway, because he had the gas company there in Birmingham. He just liked to promote the show.

So anyway, in '61, we played ... Well, I'm going to put '61 down here. I don't think ... We opened again, January the 25th in Miami Beach. Went to Jacksonville Florida, Montgomery Alabama, Columbus Georgia, Winston-Salem North Carolina, Greenville South Carolina, which my old friend Keener Garrett promoted and did a good job. We did our gross in three days there was pretty good. It was around \$61,000. Sold out for that small building.

Anyway, went to Nashville Tennessee, then Charlotte North Carolina, Greensboro North Carolina, Washington DC, Haddonfield New Jersey, New York City, Boston Massachusetts, Buffalo, Toronto Canada, Muskegon Michigan, Toledo Ohio, Fort Wayne Indiana, Chicago Illinois, Kansas City.

Now the show was off again that year. We closed July the 1st, in Kansas City. And we opened again on July the 27th in Denver, Colorado. Then we went into Bozeman, Butte Montana, Spokane Washington, Portland Oregon, Oakland California, San Jose California. And then, we went to Fresno, San Francisco, Bakersfield, no, we went to San Francisco, down to Bakersfield, and then back to San Francisco.

Then San Diego, Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Las Vegas, Albuquerque New Mexico, Lubbock Texas, Oklahoma City, Dallas Texas, Tulsa Oklahoma, Des Moines Iowa, Lincoln Nebraska, Canton Ohio, and Cleveland Ohio, Pittsburgh Pennsylvania, Philadelphia Pennsylvania. And we closed in Knoxville Tennessee, December the 10th, 1961. Now our gross was close to five and a half million. So, I'm going to stop for a little bit. But that takes us through 1961.

Now it's 1962, where our winter quarters is in Venice, Florida. We still opened our show in Miami Beach, January the 24th, 1962. We went to Jacksonville, Columbus Georgia, Montgomery Alabama, Nashville Tennessee, Birmingham Alabama, Winston-Salem North Carolina, Greenville South Carolina, and Greensboro North Carolina, Charlotte North Carolina. And I might say that anytime we ever played Charlotte in those days, why Paul Buck was the manager of the building. We always played with the building. We didn't have a promoter come in. We played right with the building.

So anyway, we went to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. And I might say that our Philadelphia date in '57, and I think '58, the Feld brothers had it. But it was so bad that they either gave it up or didn't want it. Anyway, Luschinski's came in, and they had the Philadelphia from then on, 'til the time Hofheinz and the Felds bought the circus.

So anyway, we went into Washington, DC. Then we opened New York City April the 4th, and we closed May the 13th. We went from there to Boston Gardens again. And I might say that for years, we'd been playing Madison Square Garden, way back when John Ringling, when he and Tex Rickard built Madison Square Garden. We always played Boston Gardens with the building. And we played the Cow Palace in California. So, this show's been playing some buildings for years. So nobody took us over and put us in buildings. When we closed in Pittsburgh in '56, John Ringling North said, "We'll now go out next year and play exhibitions in buildings." He made that statement before any promoters got in on the deal.

Anyway, then we went to Buffalo New York, Toronto Canada, and Ottawa Canada, Muskegon Michigan, Detroit Michigan, and Chicago Illinois. Now the show this year, in 1962, we took two weeks off. We closed in Chicago July 1st. And then we went in to Sioux City Iowa, July the 17th. Then to Omaha, Denver Colorado, Spokane Washington, Seattle Washington, and Portland Oregon. And then San Jose California, San Francisco, Oakland California, San Francisco, Bakersfield, Las Vegas, San Diego, Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Long Beach, Albuquerque New Mexico, and Oklahoma City Oklahoma, and Dallas Texas, Jackson Mississippi, Memphis Tennessee, Milwaukee Wisconsin, Cleveland Ohio, Pittsburgh Pennsylvania. And then, this year, in 1962, we closed in Louisville, Kentucky November the 29th.

And now, we start 1963. And evidently in '63, we still didn't use the building down in Venice. We opened January the 24th in Miami, Florida. Went to Jacksonville Florida, Columbus Georgia, Montgomery Alabama, Nashville Tennessee, Knoxville Tennessee, Greenville South Carolina, Raleigh North Carolina, Greensboro North Carolina, Charlotte North Carolina, Washington DC, Baltimore Maryland, Philadelphia

Pennsylvania. This year, we opened the Madison Square Garden April the 3rd, and close May the 14th.

Then we went to Boston Massachusetts, May the 17th, and closed the May the 26th. On to Syracuse New York, Buffalo New York, Steubenville Ohio. Getting pretty close to Quaker City Ohio, where I came from. But anyway, then we went to Canton Ohio, Toledo Ohio, Fort Wayne Indiana, Chicago Illinois, Milwaukee Wisconsin. That time, it was July 3rd, and the shows were sold out there. That's when we had the big parade, and Schlitz was in on it and everything.

Went from there to Bozeman Montana, and Spokane Washington, Portland Oregon, Tacoma Washington, Seattle, and then on to Los Angeles, San Diego, Long Beach California, San Francisco, Oakland, and then again in San Francisco. We'd go over to Oakland for three days, then come back to the Cow Palace. Bakersfield California, San Bernardino, Lubbock Texas, Springfield Missouri, St. Louis Missouri, Sioux Falls South Dakota, Lincoln Nebraska, Amarillo Texas, Albuquerque New Mexico, Denver Colorado, Oklahoma City Oklahoma, Tulsa Oklahoma, Ardmore Oklahoma, Dallas Texas, Jackson Mississippi, Louisville Kentucky, Detroit Michigan. And this year, in '63, we closed in Cleveland Ohio, November the 24th. And now, we're up to, our gross was well over \$5 million that year.

Now, we go to 1964. I guess this is the last year we opened in Miami, because I see the next year we went into Venice. But anyway, '64, we opened January the 16th in Miami Beach, Florida. Went to Jacksonville, Greenville South Carolina, Greensboro North Carolina, Winston-Salem, Raleigh North Carolina, Washington DC, Baltimore Maryland, New York City. We opened March the 24th, and closed May the 10th. Boston Massachusetts, we again played the Garden the 15th, 16th, and 17th of May. And then, went to New Haven for the 19th, 20th, and 21st. Then came back to Boston Gardens for the 22nd, 23rd, and 24th.

Then we went to Toronto Canada, Syracuse New York, Buffalo New York, Toledo Ohio, Muskegon Michigan, Chicago Illinois, Milwaukee Wisconsin, Des Moines Iowa, Dallas Texas, Los Angeles California, Long Beach California, San Diego California, San Francisco California, Oakland California. And then back to San Francisco, then Denver, Colorado. Then we went to Tulsa Oklahoma, Hutchinson Kansas, Springfield Missouri, St. Louis Missouri, Green Bay Wisconsin, Indianapolis Indiana, Detroit Michigan, Knoxville Tennessee, Nashville Tennessee, Charlotte North Carolina, Montgomery Alabama, Birmingham Alabama, Kansas City Missouri, Pittsburgh Pennsylvania, Memphis Tennessee, and we closed in Mobile Alabama. We closed November the 29th. And that was the end of the '64 season. I see we did about five and a half million gross.

Now, 1965. I guess that's the first year that we opened in our own building in Venice, Florida, because we opened January the 9th, 1965. Then we went to Miami Florida, Jacksonville Florida, Columbus Georgia, Greenville South Carolina, Raleigh North Carolina, Greensboro North Carolina, Charleston West Virginia, Steubenville Ohio, Johnstown Pennsylvania, Washington DC, Baltimore Maryland, Philadelphia Pennsylvania, New York City New York, New Haven Connecticut, Boston

Massachusetts, Utica New York, Syracuse New York, Toronto Canada, Houston Texas, Chicago Illinois, Milwaukee Wisconsin, Calgary Canada, Edmonton Canada, Portland Oregon, Spokane Washington, Seattle Washington.

And then, we went to Oakland California, San Francisco California, Los Angeles California, Long Beach California, San Diego California, Las Vegas Nevada, Lubbock Texas, Denver Colorado, St. Louis Missouri, Kansas City Missouri, Fort Wayne Indiana, Toledo Ohio, Cleveland Ohio, Dayton Ohio, Knoxville Tennessee, Memphis Tennessee, Louisville Kentucky, Pittsburgh Pennsylvania, Charlotte North Carolina, Birmingham Alabama, Montgomery Alabama, Mobile Alabama, and we closed this year in Tampa Florida, November the 28th, 1965. And our gross was \$6,662,000, so we were doing pretty good there.

And now, I'll bring it up to 1966. We opened again in Venice Florida, January the 15th. Went to St. Petersburg Florida, Miami Florida, Jacksonville Florida, Columbus Georgia, Greenville South Carolina, Greensboro North Carolina, Raleigh North Carolina, Charleston West Virginia, Baltimore Maryland, Washington DC, Philadelphia Pennsylvania. And we opened the Garden in New York City April the 5th, and closed May the 15th.

Then to New Haven Connecticut, Boston, and Detroit Michigan, Nashville Tennessee, Little Rock, Houston Texas, Dallas Texas, Oklahoma City, San Angelo Texas, Albuquerque New Mexico, Phoenix Arizona, Los Angeles California, Long Beach California, San Diego, San Francisco, and Oakland California, San Francisco, San Bernardino, Las Vegas, Denver, Tulsa Oklahoma, St. Louis, Kansas City, Chicago, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Dayton Ohio, Charlotte North Carolina, Montgomery Alabama, and Birmingham Alabama. That was the end of that, 1966.

By the way, that's the first year that I took RB66, my railroad car on the show. I went out in 1966. Katie and I'd had a half a car before. That was the old stateroom that Pat Valdo had had a long time, and we fixed it over. But in '66, John Ringling North said why don't you put your car on, so that's how that happened. So that year, our net that year was \$7,349,000.

So, that'll take us up to 1967, which is the last year that the Ringlings had the show. Now, we opened in 1967, Venice. Then St. Petersburg, Miami, and Tampa Florida, Jacksonville Florida, then Greenville South Carolina, Greensboro North Carolina, Charleston West Virginia, Raleigh, Baltimore Maryland, Washington DC, Philadelphia Pennsylvania. We opened the Garden April the 4th and closed May the 14th. Montreal Canada, New Haven Connecticut, Boston Massachusetts, Providence Rhode Island, Knoxville Tennessee, Houston Texas, Shreveport Louisiana, Little Rock Arkansas, Dallas Texas, Phoenix Arizona, Los Angeles California, Anaheim California, San Diego California, Fresno California, and Oakland California.

Then we went to San Francisco, Portland Oregon, Spokane Oregon, Butte Montana, Duluth Minnesota, Madison Wisconsin, Chicago Illinois, Detroit Michigan, Toledo Ohio, Dayton Ohio, Pittsburgh Pennsylvania, and Charlotte North Carolina. We closed in Birmingham Alabama, November the 19th. Our net that year was almost \$8 million.

Now, I'm going to just put ... That was the last year that the Ringlings controlled the show.

I wanted to say a little more about our promoters. I said before that Harry Dube contacted the Feld brothers when they came on. Well, Harry Dube published our program, that's how his connection was with the show. He'd had the program for quite a few years. But anyway, in 1966, we had about eight buildings where we promoted the show with the building. And Martel Brett, he had about four dates that he promoted. Circus Shows, that was the Luschinski, that year had nine buildings that they promoted. And Super Shows, the Feld brothers, that particular year had 12.

Now on this list I'm telling you now, Greensboro, North Carolina is not on there, but we played there. And all the time that we played Greensboro, at that time, we promoted with the building. And my good friend Bob Kent, he was manager of the building. Bob Kent now is manager of the Omni. Not the manager, I think he's president of the company that has the Omni in Atlanta, Georgia.

So, I'll just say now, in 1966 when we played Charlotte, North Carolina, the building promoted. Venice, Florida, of course, we promoted, because we owned thank you building. St. Petersburg, Florida, the building promoted and the manager then was Harry Draper. Miami Beach, Florida, why Super Shows came in and promoted. Jacksonville, Florida, the building promoted, and Lavery, he was the manager of the building.

Columbus, Georgia was by Martel Brett. Charleston, West Virginia was Circus Shows. That's the Luschinski. Raleigh, North Carolina was Circus Shows. Then we went into Baltimore, Maryland, Super Shows did that date. Washington DC was Super Shows. And of course, that was their headquarters and their office at that time.

Now, we went to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and back to Luschinski with Circus Shows. New Haven, Connecticut, always done by the building, and Nate [Pottoloff 00:32:32]. He owned the building, and he promoted with us. Boston, Massachusetts at the Boston Garden was always the building.

Nashville, Tennessee, Super Shows. Little Rock, Arkansas was Circus Shows. Oklahoma City was done by Martel Brett. San Angelo, Texas, Circus Shows. Then we went to Albuquerque, New Mexico, and that was Super Shows. Phoenix, Arizona, Super Shows. And Los Angeles, by that time, why Feld, Super Shows had taken over. Before that, all of our California dates was done by promoters out on the West Coast, especially promoters we had out of San Diego.

But then, Los Angeles, Super Shows had it. And Long Beach, California, Super Shows. San Diego was promoted that year, '66, we played a ballpark. It wasn't any building there. And the San Diego baseball company promoted the show with the circus. Las Vegas, that was Circus Shows with Luschinski. Denver, Colorado was Circus Shows. San Bernardino, Circus Shows.

Then we went to St. Louis, Missouri, and that was Super Shows with Feld. My good old friend Cotton Fenner, he was the one that did all the shows for the Super Shows. He and I worked together for many years. Then Tulsa, Oklahoma, Super Shows. And Chicago, Super Shows. Cotton Fenner did that for the Felds. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Super Shows. Dayton, Ohio, Circus Shows. That was back to Luschinski. And Montgomery, Alabama, Martel Brett. And Birmingham, Alabama, Martel Brett. That'll give you a little idea of how many promoters we used in the year 1966. I straightened out the thing about who Harry Dube was. Of course, he was with us for many years, and had the Circus magazine. That takes care of '66.

And of course, I just went over '67. That was the last year that Ringling Brothers controlled the circus, because they sold the circus November the 11th, 1967 to Judge Hofheinz from Houston, and the Feld brothers from Washington DC. Approximately, Hofheinz put in seven and a half million, and the Feld brothers put in \$500,000. That's how that was. They took over for the 1968 season.

Tony, I'd just like to talk a little bit about when I became superintendent of the front door. I had the tickets and so forth, in 1954. We went into 1955, and that's when we had all the trouble with the unions. We had the Teamsters and AVGA, we had everything going then. Many day when I'd be on the front door looking out there, they'd have guys, some goons from Skid Row out there carrying cards and everything. They got pretty bad when they started to put sand in the gasoline tanks, and throwing rocks at the trucks when they're going back and forth.

But anyway, we went through that. It was even worse in 1956. I remember July the 14th, 1956, in Canton, Ohio, John Ringling North says, "Rudy, let's go in the big top. I want to look around." We went in the big top, and of course, at that time we were having trouble with some of our own men who had been talked into helping the union out and everything. We had a lot of seats needed to be repaired and everything. It really looked bad. And John says, "We've got to close this thing."

So we had a meeting in the Jomar, and even the railroad bumped us that day, right sitting still, they bumped us. And they hurt about 26 people in the show. I think the engineer was fired or something after that. But anyway, that's when we went to Alliance, Ohio, after the show that night. We put on a matinee in Alliance about 7:00 in the evening. That took care of that day.

And that night, of course, we went into Pittsburgh, and John North and I were in the Jomar. That's when he wrote out the release for me to give to the press, which I gave to the press at 11:00 in the morning that day, July 16th, 1956. That was the last day for the big top for Ringling Brothers. I think we did about \$19,000 that day. But at that time, with 1,200 people, and feeding everybody, it cost about \$25,000 a day to operate.

So that's when we took the trains and went back into Sarasota. On the way down, of course, John had his chef in the Jomar. Things were pretty tough, but we were living pretty good. For some reason, I asked John North, said I'd like to buy one of the



railroad cars from him. He said, "The way things are going, they ought to be enough to go around." So anyway, I later on, in 1958, is when I bought Car 66.

I think I said before that we stayed in winter quarters up 'til '57. Then we opened our regular season in Madison Square Garden, which I think I gave you the date before this. Anyway, I wanted to say something about 1963. It was right after October the 1st in '63 ...

... Friends to go to Europe. We had our European circus in Paris at that time. John had wanted me to come over for the opening, but anyway, it seems like everybody else went, and somebody had to watch the store back here. Katie and I got on the ship, and about halfway over to Europe I got a call from John North, and he said, "I know you thought you was going to have a couple weeks' vacation, but I think you've got to go to work."

So when I arrived in Paris, why John North and [Weldy 00:40:35], who did our costumes, were having dinner. So, his chauffeur met Katie and I at the train after we took the train over from the boat from La Havre. I went there and Katie went to the hotel, Continental, where we had our reservations, and I went on to see John North and Weldy.

He said that he had a big dinner the night before with Arthur Concello, and Concello says, "Well, I'll be back to take it out of the building for you. Don't worry about a thing." That's when Concello arrived in New York, and he was fired. That took care of another one of the times that Concello was out. That doesn't mean that he's not coming back again, but anyway, he was out.

That's when I, the title, one of the other 11 titles that I had during my career with the circus, I became Assistant to the President then. I was already Treasurer of the corporation on the board of directors. So anyway, I stayed in Europe for about three months. I went for two weeks.

But I'll tell you, it was around December the 16th, 1963 that we were playing Hamburg, Germany. It was Christmas time, business was lousy. That's one of those times I was sitting in a matinee. I was the seat there, and Otto Griebing came in. He said, "Rudy, watch me make those seats laugh."

Anyway, I came back to the United States around December the 16th, very happy to be back home. Then came into Sarasota. We were getting the show ready for the next season. As soon as I can get ahold of Charlie Smith from the railroads, I'll try to give you a little dope on the 15 cars we came back on, and when we started to add cars. I already told you that I put my car, my car went on the circus in 1966. So, I'll get back on this tape shortly.

I was down and saw Charlie Smith. It seems that when we first went on the rails in 1960, we went on with 15 cars. That was the latter part of that year. Charlie said next year we went up to 17. And each year we added a few cars. I think we had about 30

when I put my car on in 1966. And of course, I believe we got up to about 40 cars. But that's about the way.

Now, I had a letter from Richard J. Reynolds the 3rd. He wrote me. He lives in Atlanta, Georgia. He wanted me to try to give him a few answers about the winter quarters. Now, his first question was, "In addition to the railroad shed and car shop buildings, were steel beams and trusses also taken from Sarasota's menagerie, sale off building to build the Venice railroad?" Now, Charlie says, "No. This was built by the G and G Metals of Venice."

Second question. "In 1960, were circus flat cars used to move wagons from Sarasota down to Venice, or were they trucked?" Well, they were trucked, because at that time, we were not on rails.

Now, number three. "When the circus train first arrived in Venice, November '60, the animals and equipment were unloaded at the railroad station downtown. What year did they start using the railroad sidings at Center Road to unload the animals and equipment?" And Charlie says, "That was 1961." Wait a minute, yeah, 1961.

The next question was, "Older maps show that Seaboard's track once crossed Center Road and ran South thereof several hundred yards. Now it stops on the Northern side of Center Road. When was the track taken up South of Center Road?" That track was taken out in 1977.

Number five question. "Did the circus once use the tracks South of Center Road?" They did. It was a storage for about six cars when we were in. We used that particular track down there.

Now number six. "Were Center Road and Tamiami Trail used for walking animals and moving equipment to and from the train?" And the answer to that was yes.

Number seven. "In moving to or from the train, do the animals and equipment use the back gate into US 41, or do they go via the streets in front of the Arena building?" Animals used the back gate. Equipment used the front gate.

Number eight. "How far did Seaboard Railroad go with plans for the spur tracks over to the winter quarters?" Well, I'll tell you, they just talked about that. They never had any plans or anything on it. Number nine. No. It says, "Where would the sidings have been located if we had put the trains over there?" Well, we didn't know, because we never had the work done.

Number nine. "How were the animals and equipment moved between railroad tracks and winter quarters while the Intracoastal Canal was being dug?" By way of Center Road to Business 41. Then in 1967, Intracoastal was finished and then we crossed the bridge.

Number 10. "After moving to Venice, was there an annual blessing of the train ceremony marking the departure for each tour, other than CFA Sullivan's?" No, we

didn't have none after Father Sullivan. Fact is, I was down the trains the night, and I talked to him 10 minutes before he keeled over.

Number 11. "On what date did Jomar and Rudy Bundy's private cars leave Sarasota for Louisiana?" It was March the 21st, 1985.

The next question. "Were the 1948, '56 seat wagons used to form the grandstand inside the Venice Arena building before permanent seating was installed?" The answer to that is no.

Number 13. "In its early years, did the Venice Arena building have a portable or a moveable grandstand?" Yes. All grandstand is hinged to arena walls, and raised by overhead winch. Then ran on tracks all around the arena, raised one section at a time to give complete use of the arena floor.

Number 14 question. "Were the sides of the arena building once enclosed by canvas hung from the roof?" Yes. Sidewalls was used winter of '60 for the '61 season. "If so, when were permanent sides installed?" That was in 1961.

15. "When were offices installed upstairs in front of the arena building?" Half in 1960, and finished in 1961 and '62.

Number 16. "Has the arena building ever been used for other than circus performances or rehearsals?" Yes. "If so, what kind of events?" We had home shows there, and we used it every year for the clown college.

And, "What are the answers to questions on attached sheet?" That's about some of the building that they put in down there. I'll read a few of those. "Did the open arena have a hard paved surface in the early '60s?" The answer is yes.

Building number 16, Wardrobe, Prop Shop, and Storage built when?" It was built in 1966.

"When was the fence put around the yard?" 1962.

"Hard surface yard. When paved?" 1975.

"The outdoor training arena and cat barn built when?" 1967.

"The ring barn built when?" It was 1967.

"The Pie Car building, when built?" 1961.

"A barn for the gorilla wagons was built in 1961. The building, number 39, truck stop, out of sight when built." It's out of sight. The reason it says that is because I have a picture here. It's out of sight. You can't see it. That was built in 1970.

Horse, elephant barn, when built?" 1966.

I'll keep on doing a few things on this, and see how it comes out, and try to give you a little more dope. I'm leaving. This is the 16th of May. I'm playing my last date at Sara Bay Country Club tomorrow night. And Saturday, we're having dinner at the Yacht Club. And then Katie and I are going to start to Ohio. So when I get to Ohio, I'll try to send this tape to you. I hope it turns out all right.

This is now January the 2nd, 1986. I went to Ohio, as I said on the tape. I talked to Tony on the phone, but I didn't send him the tape, so I have it here. But I want to say that a very sad thing happened June the 4th, 1985. John Ringling North, who had been my friend for over 40 years, he died very suddenly. He was getting ready to go out to dinner. He was in Brussels, Belgium. I suppose if it had to be that way, why that was the way to go, because he liked to get ready and go out and eat at all the good restaurants. So, that's how it happened. That was very sad news.

Since that time, I've talked to Henry Ringling North, who was here in November of this year, or last year now. He was here three days and we saw he and his son every day. So, it's too bad about John, but he lived a good life. He was almost 82 years old. So, that's all I'll say about that at the moment.