

CWM Audio 47

Pam and Kay Rosaire Interview July 29, 2016

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

- Speaker 1: It is July 29th at the Robert L. Parkinson Library and Research Center in Baraboo, Wisconsin. This is an interview with Kay and Pam Rosaire. Scott O'Donnell is conducting the interview.
- Scott O'Donnell: Morning to you both.
- Kay Rosaire: Good morning.
- Pam Rosaire: Morning.
- Scott O'Donnell: So get you both to state your names for the record and then going to get you to start telling us about the earlier, or as far back as your memory goes.
- [00:00:30]
- Kay Rosaire: Okay I'm Kay Rosaire. I'm the middle child. Well I'm actually the ... There were five kids in our family. There was Linda and Pam that are the eldest, they're twins. Then myself, then my brother Derek who we no longer have with us, and my sister Ellian, five kids. I'm the better looking one.
- Pam Rosaire: I'm the smart one. And the best animal trainer. Because I take after [crosstalk 00:00:53]
- Kay Rosaire: She's speaking for me of course.
- Pam Rosaire: I take after my dad.
- [00:01:00]
- Scott O'Donnell: Very good. You come from a multi-generational circus family, how many generations?
- Kay Rosaire: Eight generations we've been told by the people that study that kind of thing.
- Scott O'Donnell: Mm-hmm (affirmative).
- Kay Rosaire: On both sides.
- Scott O'Donnell: Eight generations of what genre of circus performing?
- Kay Rosaire: Well my mom's family were from Ireland and they had Kays Brothers Circus, which was a very well known family circus in Ireland. I think they did come to England a

[00:01:30] couple of time. Then my dad's family, the Rosaire family, they owned a circus in England. They were one of the few circus' that continued to uprate during World War II because there were eight children in each family so they didn't need anybody else for the show. They could just rely on the family so they were able to continue.

Scott O'Donnell: Your family is now known and we'll get to it for animal training. Is that what all the generations did or was there a ...

Kay Rosaire: No actually.

Scott O'Donnell: Multiple disciples?

[00:02:00]

Kay Rosaire: All kinds of disciples. The Rosaire girls on my father's generation were mostly acrobats. They did do bareback riding, which is part of being an acrobat. My father was really the only one that was really interested in animals and that was because when he was about 18, he was an aerialist and an acrobat, and he broke his back, on the rings. He did a bad dismount, landed on his heels, his back broke. He had a surgery that was actually written up in the medical books because it was the first of its kind ever done in England. They actually took the bone out of his shin and put it in his back, and made an aluminum plate and they had only recently had aluminum. They put the aluminum plate in his shin and in his spine.

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[00:03:00] They actually used to take him around to the wards in the hospitals to show that it is possible to recover from such a terrible injury. They'd bring him in, he was in the hospital for almost two years, but when he came out he was actually able to do somersaults and backs, and flip flop round off back. They would bring him to the hospital wards to show that there is hope, that you can recover. He would do a round of flip flops down the whole hospital ward to encourage the people that had been injured in the war.

Scott O'Donnell: Wow. Very good. Your dad became known for?

[00:03:30]

Kay Rosaire: He had wonderful relationship with animals. He was probably one of the first people that actually worked with the brain of the animal rather than trying to dominate animals. He always worked with them as partners and he was an animal lover. He had his own little zoo on the show when he was a kid. He had all kinds of different little exotic animals that he would display. As he grew he got more, he got bears, and monkeys, and all different kinds of animals. He had a real affinity and a connection with them and animals actually had an affinity for him. Some people are just more attractive to animals. Animals have a bond with them, immediate bond, and so that's where that came from. The fact that he had been hurt and couldn't do what he used to do, he really focused on animal training. He became famous in England for his comedy horse act.

[00:04:00]

Scott O'Donnell: The horse's name was?

[00:04:30]

Kay Rosaire: The act was Rosaire and Tony the Wonder Horse. It was a really unique act. It was sort of a parody between the trainer and the horse, where the horse always outsmarted the trainer. People loved that. They love it when the animal gets the better of the human. It was a really unique act because even though it was a fairly big horse, he was able to perform on theaters, on stages, go up in elevators, climb steps. He worked everywhere. It wasn't just a circus act, it was a variety act.

[00:05:00]

Scott O'Donnell: How many Tonys over the years?

Kay Rosaire: Actually ...

Pam Rosaire: Five.

Kay Rosaire: Only five, which is amazing because it was a span of over 70 years of working with the horses. The first horse he got was actually a Palomino that he saw in the street pulling a milk wagon. He wanted a horse that would stand out and be colorful, circus looking. He went to the guy with the milk carton, offered him some money

[00:05:30]

and he walked away with the horse. That was the first Tony and he was phenomenal. He had such a personality and he had a very unique face. He had a white muzzle, which was great for the comedy that they did. He was very stand out on the stage, in a theater, anywhere. My father worked at the Palladium, all the big theaters in England during the winter. That's when we were working with Oliver

[00:06:00]

Hardy and Stan Laurel. Toured all over England with them. My dad was never out of work because it was such a funny act. It was great.

Scott O'Donnell: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Kay Rosaire: That was the beginning of ... You know we were all little kids back stage. My mom had a, it's kind of interesting, because my mom and dad were sort of competing for top billing on the theaters. I've seen posters. A friend of mine has posters that

[00:06:30]

feature my mom above my dad, because that's how it worked in England. The top of the bill was the big act. Some of the posters, my dad's at the top and my mom's at the bottom. It was always fun to hear them say, "Well I'm the top of the bill this week." It was great. My mom did ...

Scott O'Donnell: What did mom do? Yeah.

Kay Rosaire: She had 31 pekingeses. That was a sight. 31 little pekingeses running on stage was like a rug, you know?

Scott O'Donnell: Oh right.

[00:07:00]

Kay Rosaire: Her act was also very, very well accepted and loved because they were very cute. She was a very attractive woman so it was a great combination. Then when they married, my dad went into the dog act. He did a lot of the comedy, lot of the falls,

[00:07:30] and just the funny butt and all that. Both acts were very well received and they worked all the time. My mom was quite a character. She used to plant vegetables in every theater we played, because we'd be there a few weeks. If we didn't get the harvest that year we'd come back next year and she'd dig up potatoes, because rationing was still going on. It was hard to get food so my mom was very clever about figuring out ways to produce her own food.

Scott O'Donnell: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Watching mom and dad from behind the scenes is that what brought you to want to train animals, or how?

[00:08:00]
Kay Rosaire: Well for me ...

Scott O'Donnell: What motivated both of you to start?

Kay Rosaire: My motivation was because my mom's brother was actually a pretty famous lion trainer in England. He played mostly theaters. He worked in a square cage. It was very different than anything you see today. Most of his act was basically him trying to get in the cage with the lions. He worked African Lions. The whole act was him trying to make his way into the cage because it was a square cage and the animals were already in there. Originally it was in a wagon and then eventually they made it bigger. It was a square cage that they set up on the stage and then the animals would be in there. They had a double door. Half of the act was just the fact of him trying to get in and them attacking the door. People would actually ... They say that women would faint in the audience and be screaming, "Don't go in there mister. Don't go in there, they'll eat you. Don't go." And they'd actually faint.

[00:08:30]

[00:09:00]

[00:09:30] He was a very tall handsome man and my mom was his assistant. She worked the doors. I grew up with the stories of him and his fame. He was like a matinee idol, this is in the 30s. He was like a movie star. Unfortunately he died very young. He was bitten in the ankle by a cub, just playing around, and it turned into an infection and he passed. Growing up with the stories of my famous uncle and then when I was a teenager, here in American, we came over in '61, when I was in high school in Pennsylvania my dad took over the animals from the TV show Daktari. We had Gentleman the Bear, Clarence the Crossed-Eyed Lion, and Judy and Toto the chimps. Well I was assigned to take care of the lion, that was my job while I was in high school, and just fell in love with big cats from then on and decided that's what I wanted to do.

[00:10:00]

Scott O'Donnell: Pam?

Kay Rosaire: Pam. Your turn.

Pam Rosaire: I didn't want to interrupt. You were on a roll. So where do you want me to [crosstalk 00:10:16]

Kay Rosaire: So how did you start with chimps?

Pam Rosaire: Well when I was seven years old, I was hanging out with my dad most of the time. He was always asking me what I wanted to do when I grew up. He said, "I'm going to ask you again in another few weeks and I want the right answer.", "Okay."
[00:10:30] Meanwhile, I fell in love with a chimp so I decided right there and then I wanted to have a chimp act. He asked me again and I said, "Well I want to do a chimp act." He goes, "Well how you going to do that?" I said, "Well first I got to get a chimp." So he bought a chimp. He told me if I taught it a trick in a week he might get me another one.

[00:11:00]

[00:11:30] Well in a week I had it doing a whole routine, so he bought me two more. Then I had three chimps and two were good, one was a real stinker. I ended up trading the stink part so I could get a good one. By the way I traded it to some of Tarzan's family. We happened to go to France after Spain and that's where I unloaded the mean chimp. I've been doing chimps ever since. In fact, I've been working chimps for 62 years.

Scott O'Donnell: Wow.

Pam Rosaire: Right now, my oldest chimp is 56 this year.

[00:12:00]

Scott O'Donnell: Wow.

Pam Rosaire: I managed to raise them all from little babies. I think that's why I've been successful with them as adults, because they actually do love me. It's the only route that I'd want to go. Eventually I got the main chimp, the good one, riding a bicycle. My dad put him in the dog act and he used to ride in and out of the hurdles on the bike.
[00:12:30] Incidentally speaking of the dog act, the props that Dallas used, the hurdles, same dog act my mother used those hurdles.

Scott O'Donnell: Wow.

Pam Rosaire: And I used them when I, you probably remember when I did my dog act.

Scott O'Donnell: Uh-huh (affirmative). Sure do.

Pam Rosaire: Okay.

Scott O'Donnell: They're hefty hurdles too.

Pam Rosaire: It's basically the same routine.

Scott O'Donnell: I haven't lifted them, they're pretty [stun 00:12:47] hurdles.

Pam Rosaire: Yeah.

Scott O'Donnell: What circus did your family bring them to America? What was that contract?

Pam Rosaire: We came over to do the Ed Sullivan Show.

Scott O'Donnell: Okay.

Kay Rosaire: George Hamid.

Scott O'Donnell: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[00:13:00]

Pam Rosaire: But once we got here we didn't want to go back. George Hamid, he saw us work in Italy and he wanted to bring us to America. My dad wouldn't, he said, "No." You know, a little skeptical. He said, "Well how about if I get you the Ed Sullivan Show?" So my dad jumped on that. We came over on a Greek ship. It was a passenger liner called the Queen Fredericka. We docked 14 days late because he hit a hurricane out at sea. We were the only ones in the dining room, was just kids. Everybody else was seasick, it was horrible. We did the Ed Sullivan Show and then we went on the Hamid Show for two seasons and never went back.

[00:13:30]

Scott O'Donnell: And unlike most circus families, you all made home in Erie, Pennsylvania.

Kay Rosaire: Yeah after four years of being on Hamid and we did all of the Hamid things, which he had the New Jersey State Fair in Trenton. He had the Steel Pier in Atlantic City. It was kind of a nice route. We did all the shrine circuses which were huge in those days. I mean Harrisburg was two full weeks. They brought in all kinds of TV celebrities for it. Then in the summer when everything was dark as far as the shrine dates go, we were at the Steel Pier. I think we did three or four seasons there. Then after the four years, my dad called a family meeting and we had to decide whether we wanted to stay in the U.S. or go back to Europe. It was unanimous that we all wanted to stay.

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[00:14:30]

Pam Rosaire: We landed in Erie because we were very good friends with Pam and Merle [Cook 00:14:43].

Kay Rosaire: Cook's Family [crosstalk 00:14:44]

Pam Rosaire: In fact, we worked with them in England before we came to America. We became family sort of. We still are. That's the reason we settled in Erie, but we had no idea that it got so cold in the winter time.

[00:15:00]

Kay Rosaire: Yeah we were there in August.

Pam Rosaire: Yeah. We were like, "Oh this is great. We can live here. This is paradise."

Kay Rosaire: Yeah there's a beach.

Scott O'Donnell: Yeah.

Pam Rosaire: Well.

Scott O'Donnell: Until.

Pam Rosaire: The first winter was like a total shock. We got snowed in.

Kay Rosaire: Yeah.

Pam Rosaire: We used to have to take the horses and ride them to the store to get groceries and stuff. It was exciting for us because we were kids, we were teenagers, but my mom and dad didn't love it so much.

[00:15:30]

Kay Rosaire: It was funny because we didn't have a clue of the geography of the country. Coming from Europe, we didn't know. We had a phone in the house, my dad bought a pretty big farm in Erie. He had a suitcase full of cash, because in those days everybody got paid in cash. There were no banks that were connected. My dad actually made more money with the dog and the horse act on Hamid than the whole [Hanneford 00:15:53] family made with all the people and all the equipment that they had. He had a suitcase of money and matter of fact George Hamid used to come and borrow money off him if needed cash he'd go to my dad and say, "Give me a couple of thousand." He had all this money so rather than putting it in a bank, he bought a big farm, which was in Erie. We had no idea of the climate or any of that. We knew it was centrally located for doing shows because if you live in Florida you've got 500 miles to go before you're out of the state.

[00:16:00]

Scott O'Donnell: Right.

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Kay Rosaire: That winter, the first winter, we're on the phone to people in Florida and they're out playing tennis and at the beach. My parents were like, "What the hell, how is that?" It was a long time we were kind of stuck there because we had all these animals and had bought this whole big farm.

Pam Rosaire: We had 50 horses.

Kay Rosaire: Yup.

Pam Rosaire: We used to do riding academy.

Kay Rosaire: Yeah during high school I ran a riding academy and taught. While they would go on the road, I would be there with the horses. Eventually, as we fell in love and got married we all moved to Florida. Then dad sold the place in Erie.

[00:17:00]

Scott O'Donnell: What was the first job that either one of you got on your own? Outside of the family.

Kay Rosaire: Of course with the family we did horses. We had a penguin act one time. We did all different acts, smaller animal acts. Then when I left, I actually got a job on [Gatti

[00:17:30] 00:17:28] Charles with my friends the [Ronritas 00:17:32]. They were working for Vicky Hanneford actually. I got a job in concessions. While I was in concessions, I used to look down at the show and look at the acts. One of the worst acts on the show was the cat act. It was a guy named Frank [Magarashi 00:17:49]. It was just horrible. He hardly wore a costume. He mostly wore white shorts and no shirt. I found out he was the highest paid act on the show and he didn't do anything else, just the cat act. It was really not good. He was really mean to the animals, and mean to his wife. Just not a very nice guy. I used to watch him and think ...

Pam Rosaire: Don't hold anything back Kay.

Kay Rosaire: Oh I'm not. I told him to his face actually what a mean guy he was. At the end of that season when I went home I thought, "Well I'm going to get some lions and start my own lion act." It just turned out that there was an option of cats. They had closed Great Adventure up in New Jersey and they loaded all the lions in a semi cattle trailer and drove them down to Florida. Ralph [Shawpocker 00:18:46] had them at the ranch and they were auctioning off these lions. I only heard about it at the end of the day. I rushed over there to see what was left and they were all gone. Everybody had bought everything. There were three lions there and none of them had hair. They all had the mange. The way they'd been feeding them, they'd been throwing frozen blocks of chicken in there. It was like a survival of the fittest.

[00:19:00] There were these three little lions and they were in such poor condition that it was questionable whether they would live or not. I went to the guy and I said, "I'll take them, but I'm not going to pay for them because they might not live, but if they live I'll pay you." I took them home and I nursed them back to health. That was my first group of lions that I trained. I worked a cat act for almost 40 years and still do.

Scott O'Donnell: Walk us through that process. How do you train a lion?

Kay Rosaire: It was kind of interesting because all I did was change ... I used the exact same method of training the cats as we did all the other animals. The only difference is they have claws and huge teeth, and they can hurt you pretty bad. The fact that I was being so gentle with them, and rewarding them, and using bait instead of force, and not being aggressive with them. They were so sweet and were affectionate with me that I never felt that I was in any danger. I just used the same way you train any other animal. It's the same method. I don't think other trainers have done that. Unfortunately a lot of the early trainers, they kind of bullied them around until they got them where they wanted and then they quit bullying them. There was no reward or, "Good girl." Or "Good boy." None of that. It was all they knew they were doing right when they would stop being pushed around.

[00:20:30] Our methods are completely the opposite, based on encouragement and treats. However, you don't starve an animal into working either, because then when they're doing a behavior and they're hungry they're not thinking about what they're doing. They're just thinking about grabbing the treat. It's a fine line you have to have them not too hungry. They really seem to enjoy the learning process. When we go to practice, even now, they're excited. When they see me coming in

[00:21:00]

the building and they know we're going to work, they're like let's go. They look forward to that husbandry.

Scott O'Donnell: Is there a difference between a lion's personality and a tiger's personality?

[00:21:30]

Kay Rosaire: Oh yeah.

Scott O'Donnell: Is there a difference?

Kay Rosaire: Big difference. That's why in this country most of the cat trainers work tigers, because they're a lot easier. They're higher energy level, they're not as affectionate and loving as a lion, but they're much higher energy and they work easier in the hot weather particularly. I always preferred lions. I think they're really stunning looking. Big make lion. Very few of the trainers over here work big male lions. I was very
[00:22:00] luck in the biggest part of my career, I had two wonderful male lions that were compatible with me, that worked well together. They were never fighting or anything. They were just awesome. I know a lot of the men trainers didn't even want to work with lions, particularly male lions.

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The difference between a lion and a tiger is that if you get a tiger upset, they get upset really, really quick and they cool down pretty quickly. If you get a male lion upset, he's still thinking about it tomorrow. They don't cool down, so you got to really, you have to work with them as partners. You can't bully a male lion. You have to be in charge, but you can't push it in his face. You can't be rude to him or disrespect him. You got to work as a team.

Scott O'Donnell: And chimps?

[00:23:00]

Pam Rosaire: Chimps. 98.4 human DNA. They have much larger issues than cats. This year they wanted to give them human rights and the do-getters called me to ask for my opinion. I asked them if they were going to have to buy Obamacare so they hung up on me. My biggest love has always been chimps. It started in very early age. I
[00:23:30] speak their language. You would never learn that as an adult.

Scott O'Donnell: What is that language?

Pam Rosaire: Chimp. It's like you better pay attention when they talk.

Scott O'Donnell: Uh-huh (affirmative).

Pam Rosaire: Because I started at seven, at seven you're like a sponge, you absorb everything. As
[00:24:00] an adult you would never take the time to learn their language. They also have a sign language too which is really amazing. It's so acute that people don't notice it. I could go to any zoo and talk to the chimps. In fact, they seem to know. Whenever I go to a zoo the chimps always start getting all excited. They just know, it's something about me I guess. I guess that's why my mom named me Pam, because

I'm part [chimpanzee 00:24:17]. I love what I do, I don't ever want to do anything else. I'm still doing it, thank God.

[00:24:30]

Scott O'Donnell: What's the social order like with chimps? Was that a big part of their [crosstalk 00:24:32]

Pam Rosaire: There's a very big pecking order.

Scott O'Donnell: Yeah.

Pam Rosaire: Yeah you have to be in that order. I'm the matriarch. Meaning that first of all I'm their mother. I bottle raised every one of them, except for [Newton 00:24:43]. I fed him myself. He was born at the same time as Dallas and I raised them together, because his mother died and he was born premature. He wouldn't have lived if I would've given him formula. So there's that matriarchy there. I also raised Newton's father the same way, only I bottle fed him. When you do that for generations, you're instilled in that family of chimps because they stay together as a family group throughout their life. They don't leave home, unlike us humans.

[00:25:00]

Scott O'Donnell: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Pam Rosaire: They like to hang around to mom and dad. The males help take care of the babies believe it or not. If a mother loses a baby, a male will pick it up and run with it, keep it safe. They're very sensitive. Their feelings get hurt very easily. If I yell at them they cry. They're so touchy. Some of them I can't even talk tough to them. They're like, "Oh you're going to upset me now. I'm going to cry." I've got one that throws up when I get mad at her. Big acting job though. That Geraldine, that's the one that does the dance. She's awesome. You can't push chimps. You can only push them so far and then they rebel. You know Hitler actually thought about making soldiers out of them. Did you, have you ever?

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[00:26:00]

Scott O'Donnell: Mm-hmm (negative). No.

Pam Rosaire: You should read about that. It's really quite stupid. I mean why would you train serial killers to do something like that. They're so gentle but they're so mean too. It's a pecking order. They have to be because with them most of their bullying and meanness is acting. They just overact so that they don't have to be so mean. They're remarkable. In fact, they were my best friends growing up. I didn't hang out with kids, I only hung out with the chimps. Always, we used to play hide and seek with them and everything. They're very good at hiding. In fact my baby the other day, he's in my house, the little stinker he up and down, up and down, and everywhere. I said, "Roger watch him. I'll be right back." I come back, "Where's the chimp?" Roger goes "Well you were watching him." So now he's hiding in the house. Found him under my bed hiding. He thinks it's funny but it's really not. He's a little brat.

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I played The White House twice with my chimps. I'm very proud of that because I

think there was only one other chimp who every performed at The White House. That's the one that worked with Ronald Reagan in that movie, wondered years [crosstalk 00:27:50]

Scott O'Donnell: Bedtime for Bonzo.

Pam Rosaire: Yeah. Yeah. In fact they even gave me a suite of rooms in the basement because I stayed a few days. That was fun. The second time I went back, they parked all my stuff on the back lawn, in the tree area there. I stayed like a week after the thing was over. I did the [crosstalk 00:28:10]

Scott O'Donnell: What was the president at the time? Do you remember?

Pam Rosaire: Nixon.

Scott O'Donnell: Nixon.

Pam Rosaire: Yeah.

Scott O'Donnell: Very neat.

Pam Rosaire: Lucky me, huh?

Scott O'Donnell: Lucky you. You just mentioned a name and this will take us back a little bit in the time. You just mentioned the name Roger. Who's Roger?

[00:28:30]

Pam Rosaire: Roger. He's a guy I sold a chimp to when I first had the hot pants for him. He's a bareback rider and then as soon as he met me he wanted to put a chimp in his act. I said, "Well I've got one I could let you use. She's a good chimp and she already rides." I said, "But we've got to make a deal here. I get her back when you can't handle her anymore." Right? I gotta blow my nose, my allergies. I sold him the chimp but I made him beg me a lot. I made the deal, "I get it back when you can't handle it anymore." I knew he would have to be calling me every day to ask me what to do with this disobedient little brat. I worked with him on that and then I ended up on the same show for the whole season. When I left it was like ...

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Scott O'Donnell: What show was that? Do you remember?

Pam Rosaire: The Castle Show. That was before Tarzan got it. When it was in its ... It was a great show in this heyday, that show was. Marianne and [Hubert 00:29:53] was the nicest people to work for. He was a great fisherman. He used to take me fishing all the time. I loved it. We got on the Castle Show and the end of the season came. I'm not too good at flying, you know? I didn't like flying to visit Roger. Every time he came to visit me, he'd just get there and his family would call, he'd have to go back again. That got to be annoying. I told him, I said, "Look, I'm not doing this visiting stuff anymore. You either do the deed or we're done." So we got married. I got a chimp anyway after all. I had her for 47 years. She just died last August. She was

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the one that worked in the riding act all those years, but she was a great performer.

Scott O'Donnell: What did she do in the riding act?

[00:31:00]

Pam Rosaire: The passing leap. When Dennis left, when Roger's brother left the riding act, we're like besides Roger, I was the only one that could ride. The others, we all faked it. Me and Roger doing all the riding it's really hard on your body. I was no spring chicken already, I was 33 when I started in the riding act. I was already over the hump for being an athlete. Anyway, so we kept doing that and I said, "You know what Rog? I'm not liking this. This is hurting my knees, my everything. You know?" I said, "Let's put [Kenya 00:31:41] in there and do the passing leap with the chimp." Because to jump from one horse to another, that's not easy, and Dennis was a big tall guy. It was easy for him with the long legs. Wasn't so easy for me, you know?

[00:31:30]

Scott O'Donnell: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[00:32:00]

Pam Rosaire: We taught the chimp to do it. Roger would be on the back horse. The chimp would be on the, let me think how it went now. Yeah. Roger would be on the front horse, the chimp would be on the back horse. Roger would hit the trampoline, do a forward, and land on the back horse. As he was doing the forward, the chimp used to jump from the back horse to the front horse. When Roger landed he'd jump back to the front horse again and the chimp would jump back to the back horse. It was really very much more exciting than it was with Dennis. Boy Dennis didn't like being replaced by a chimp. He still brings it up today, but it was fun.

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Scott O'Donnell: Was it a lot of work to get those two different species to work together? The chimps and the horses, did they mind each other?

Pam Rosaire: No because the chimps, I already had the pony in the chimp act.

Scott O'Donnell: Got it.

Pam Rosaire: So they were used to that. The hard thing was getting her used to those big horses, compared to a little pony, you know?

Scott O'Donnell: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[00:33:00]

Pam Rosaire: But she did a great job. She was one of the best bareback riders in the world, ever. I don't think there was a human that could ride as well as she could. Very amazing.

Scott O'Donnell: And her name again?

Pam Rosaire: Kenya.

Scott O'Donnell: Kenya. Very good. You mentioned earlier that, you said everybody got married and

ended up leaving Erie.

Kay Rosaire: Yeah everybody ...

Pam Rosaire: This one eloped.

Kay Rosaire: Well I had no choice because I'd fell in love with what we call a towner, or a [gajo
[00:33:30] 00:33:27], and my parents were so upset and didn't like the guy. Absolutely we had
no choice. We went to Chicago to Medinah Temple to tell them we wanted to get
married. They didn't want me to leave. They tried to keep me in Chicago and I
made it out the door and got to the car and off we went. That was when we went,
[00:34:00] that following winter, we went on Gatti and sold popcorn. Saved enough money to
go back home and started my cat act the following year. Following summer.
Actually went up to Erie and stayed at a farm up there in the summer because it
was too hot in Florida to do any training outdoors. I trained him there and the
following year I ... That was when George Hubler had the show at the Circus
Museum down in Sarasota. I told him, "Oh I've already been working this cat act."
[00:34:30] And I didn't even have any props. I had nothing. I just had a few weeks to put a
routine together.

Opening day at the Circus Hall of Fame in Sarasota, I was so nervous because they
had never worked in front of a crowd. You know animals, you know how difficult
they are in beginning of a career. I was set up outside in that green space they had
outside at the museum. The show went on in the building and then they would tell
[00:35:00] everybody to come outside. I was so nervous I'm thinking it's I couldn't even
practice because you were not allowed to have the animals there. You had to bring
them in for the show, do the shows, and then take them out. They had a zoning
issue there. I'd bring them in and the show starts, and unlucky for the guy but lucky
for me the guy that did the cloud swing fell. The ambulances came and they said,
[00:35:30] "Quick everybody go. We'll continue the show outside with the cat act."

Well George Hubler was busy trying to get the ambulances in and out and all that.
The guy was not seriously hurt, he was fine, but the cats were like mortified. All
these people standing around, but nobody saw it. Nobody saw the act because
they were all too busy taking care of the guy that fell. Well that gave me a chance
to get them out. The second show they were fine. It wasn't perfect, but it was
[00:36:00] possible. I saved my job because of the guy falling. We were there for I think 12
weeks.

Pam Rosaire: Yeah and then I came to visit.

Kay Rosaire: Yeah Pam came to visit.

Pam Rosaire: What a disaster.

Kay Rosaire: Yeah and was staying at the same place outside of town at [Crow Foot's 00:36:15]
Place where I was staying. She's got one of the chimps out, hanging out with it
playing. This chimp always loved me. It was named Judy from the TV show. I go up

[00:36:30] to Judy and I'm like, "Hey Judy." And Pam says, "Don't come near her. She's in a funny mood." I make a chimp stance and I go, "Are you in a funny mood?" And she grabbed me and broke my thumb and beat me up. I couldn't work. I had to call George Hubler and say, "I'm sorry I just got beat up by one of my sister's chimps and I can't work because I broke my thumb." I was all beat up and so Pam had to go in and do the chimp act for a few days until I could recover and go do my own [crosstalk 00:37:03]

[00:37:00]

Pam Rosaire: Pro bono.

Kay Rosaire: Yeah she had to fill in for me for free.

Pam Rosaire: Really jerked my chain.

Kay Rosaire: Yeah. I mean I was beat up. The chimp dragged me all over the driveway. My knees were all cut from the gravel. Oh my Gosh.

Pam Rosaire: Could've been worse.

Kay Rosaire: I learned a big lesson that day.

Pam Rosaire: I told her don't come.

[00:37:30]

Kay Rosaire: She said, "Don't come near her. She's in a funny mood." I'm, "Are you in a funny mood?"

Pam Rosaire: "Are we having a laugh?"

Kay Rosaire: She beat me up. She was a big chimp too, big female. Normally really nice to me, used to hug me and love on me. I never went near her after that though. No more chances till I'm [crosstalk 00:37:47]

Pam Rosaire: She's had a few little mishaps from my chimps.

Kay Rosaire: Yeah I think I've hurt ...

Pam Rosaire: Kiss the baby.

Kay Rosaire: More with Pam's chimps than my cats.

[00:38:00]

Pam Rosaire: I came home with a new baby one time. Just this big. So cute, looked like a little stuffed animal. Kay takes her, "Oh I love it. Oh." Cuddling it and, "Oh give me a kiss." I said, "Don't kiss him Kay.", "Oh he likes me. Look. Give me a kiss."

Kay Rosaire: He bit my lip off.

Pam Rosaire: He bit her lip off.

Kay Rosaire: I put my lip back. I put it back on and held it there all night and it actually healed and went back where it was. I think without surgery.

Pam Rosaire: You think she's learned to listen to me about chimps.

[00:38:30]

Kay Rosaire: Yeah. I don't go near the chimps. Matter of fact now she says, "Come on get a picture." And I'm like, "No I'm good."

Pam Rosaire: Good.

Kay Rosaire: "No more pictures. Thank you."

Pam Rosaire: "I'll pass." My twin sister one time, I had the chimp, do you remember he used to carry me on his shoulders Toto? She goes, "Oh I'd love to have a picture of Toto carrying me." I go, "Well come on let's do it then." Now we're at the farm in Erie and all these malamute dogs that I was training for Great Adventure to keep the baboons in were tied along the fence. I got the chimp and she goes, "Come on. Can I do it?", "Okay do it." So he's carrying her and everything's good. He's carrying her and she's all smiles. All of the sudden the dogs start ringing up, because I'm teaching them to keep the baboons in so they don't know the difference between a chimp and a baboon.

[00:39:00]

Scott O'Donnell: Right.

Pam Rosaire: He's got Linda like this on his shoulders and he goes like this. Throws her over his shoulders and grabs her ankles and beats the dogs with her.

[00:39:30]

Kay Rosaire: She looked like Raggedy Anne.

Pam Rosaire: Needless to say the picture was like this. I said, "Come on get back on and get a picture now you've put me through all this." I made her get back on him.

Kay Rosaire: We have had some great moments.

Scott O'Donnell: Tell us a little bit about the rest of your family. That's a good transition.

[00:40:00]

Kay Rosaire: Well my brother, because he got to work with Gentle Ben when he was just a kid, he took care of the bear, worked the bear, loved the bear. Eventually he had his own bear act and had a really nice bear act. Unfortunately he got melanoma about five years ago and like very short amount of time he was gone. He was really a great bear guy, because he was a big guy, very strong. He had a great sense of humor, really should've been a comedian. He was very funny guy. That was his love was the bears. That's all he every really wanted to do. He did have a dog act with dobermans it was really good too.

[00:40:30]

Pam Rosaire: He worked horses too.

Kay Rosaire: He missed the bears.

Pam Rosaire: Used to do my dad's act.

Kay Rosaire: Yeah. He was pretty talented guy. He really was. He was a fabricator. He did all the fabricating in the early days, a big athlete, he built a lot of the sets. He was just an all around circus guy that ...

Pam Rosaire: He was a great joker.

Kay Rosaire: Do anything. Yeah. He had a great sense of humor.

[00:41:00]

Pam Rosaire: Loved to joke. Told jokes. One time I was doing my dog act, I used to do part dressed dogs in my acts. Here comes Derek in drag bringing me the dressed dogs. If you knew what my brother was like, I mean you do. The beard and the big burly guy in drag, he was the most ugly girl you ever saw. The band couldn't play, it just ruined the band.

[00:41:30]

Kay Rosaire: Ellian is the great horsewoman. She was like my dad bought her a pony when she was four years old. By a month after she got the pony, she had the pony doing a whole act. She just had a gift with horses. Then as she grew up she focused on horses and eventually went and trained under, what was the guy's name in California?

Pam Rosaire: Reynolds.

Kay Rosaire: No, Randall ...

Pam Rosaire: Randall.

[00:42:00]

Kay Rosaire: Glenn Randall who trained all the movie horses. He trained the black stallion and all that. She also learned his method of horse training, which is the movie work, where they do everything hands off free. No harness, no anything. She learned all of that stuff plus what she'd learned from my dad and her own natural gift. She's just amazing with horses. She runs a riding, Rosaire's Riding Academy now in Sarasota and has a summer camp for kids. Is just a great horsewoman, quit the road because it got more and more difficult for people with horses. You'd show up at a show in building they'd have no where for you to put the horses. No floor for them to work on. Horses are slipping and falling. She just had enough of it. In order to have your own horse act you had to carry your own flooring. If you had one horse, you had to have a semi to hold the floor.

[00:42:30]

Scott O'Donnell: Right.

Kay Rosaire: So they just kind of gave up with it. The best thing she did was the comedy horse
[00:43:00] with the [Shashoney 00:42:57] the Pony, where she had, it was a [durgo 00:43:00]
with looks like two guys in a suit, but it was actually a real horse in a suit. At the
end of this routine they pulled the suit off and it was actually a horse. That was very
clever. I think that was a very cool idea that she developed. Linda, Pam's twin, did
the dog act when she was a kid. You can still see her on those circus of, there's a
[crosstalk 00:43:25]

Pam Rosaire: Cirque du [Twell 00:43:26].

Scott O'Donnell: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Kay Rosaire: From the 1950s and in Paris.

[00:43:30]

Pam Rosaire: You can see the chimp really messing my dad around really good.

Kay Rosaire: Yeah. Yeah and the bicycle broke. Remember the chain on the bike?

Pam Rosaire: They didn't want me to work that show because Linda was the cute one.

Kay Rosaire: She was the chosen one. Anyway, she never really pursued a career in show
business. Once she got married she didn't really do it. She did petting zoos, things
like that. The other four of us we all had pretty busy careers and worked many
years on the road.

[00:44:00]

Pam Rosaire: I was the only Rosaire that ever worked on the Ringling Show.

Kay Rosaire: No there were two others back in the 30s.

Pam Rosaire: No. They weren't Rosaires.

Kay Rosaire: My aunt. Yeah they ...

Pam Rosaire: They were the Rubio Sisters.

Kay Rosaire: But they were Rosaires.

Pam Rosaire: Not then they weren't. They were Rubio Sisters. My uncle Dennis married one of
them. That's how they [crosstalk 00:44:16]

Kay Rosaire: Auntie Vivi was over there.

Pam Rosaire: No she wasn't.

Kay Rosaire: Oh okay.

Pam Rosaire: I know the history.

Kay Rosaire: I'm sure you know more and I.

Pam Rosaire: Knew the history but ...

Scott O'Donnell: And where did you ...

Pam Rosaire: I had a really rough thing happen when I was over there. I know [crosstalk 00:44:29]

[00:44:30]

Scott O'Donnell: This was Ringling in Japan right?

Pam Rosaire: Yeah.

Scott O'Donnell: Yeah.

Pam Rosaire: We went over to Japan. I mean for any disaster for somebody's act would be to lose your blow-off. Well the pony was my blow-off, the trick riding. [Doc Hok 00:44:43] had canceled my quarantine on my pony, so they wouldn't let him in. They had no space for him so they sent him back. Now this is a day and a half before the show opens and here comes Mr. Felt freaking out. He goes, "What are we going to do here Pam? What do you suggest?" I said, "I suggest you send one of your people out with Roger and take the harness with you and go find me a pony. It's your mistake, not mine." Right? So they did.

[00:45:00]

Kay Rosaire: I can't imagine finding a pony in Japan.

Scott O'Donnell: In Japan, yeah.

Pam Rosaire: Not only did they find a pony ...

Kay Rosaire: They eat them.

[00:45:30]

Pam Rosaire: It was the same color as mine, same size, and the harness fit. The only thing is he was a stallion, boy what a handful. Now I'm practicing, right? So I try to practice in the ring but on the Ringling show it's very hard to get the ring ever. I decided to train him in the elephant room. I made a ring out of hay bails and I know a few of them elephants over there, because I used to work elephants too. This pony, he's a strong pony, and he kept trying to jump over the hay and get out of the ring and wait for me and stuff. I'm like, "Okay I'll fix you. I'll get closer to the elephants." So every time he jumped out the ring the elephants threw him back in. Got that out of the way really quick. Then I got the chimp on him. I practiced every half hour all day and all night until the day of the show. Believe it or not, the chimp did somersaults

[00:46:00]

[00:46:30] on him, faults, and rolls. The pony did hind legs and kneeled.

[00:47:00] Tony Harriet goes, "You know kid, you're really making me look bad here." Because he was in charge of the horses. He tried to talk me into using a llama for the trick riding for the chimps, well they'd kill a llama. Felt came around after the show and he goes, "Pam I've got to tell you this. I'm impressed." Then later on at the end of the season he offered me the job of taking over the horse department. I said, "No. I wouldn't do that. Tony Harriet's my friend." I said, "I admire the man and you're not going to find a better guy for that job."

Scott O'Donnell: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Pam Rosaire: So that was that, but it was all very good though. It could have been terrible. It could've humiliated me and my world, you know?

Scott O'Donnell: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Pam Rosaire: [00:47:30] But nobody could believe it, I trained that pony in a day and a half and he was so mean. He'd bite, kick. If you tapped him on the leg to kneel him, he'd try to bite your hand. He was bad. We set him up in a pen in a back end, when they brought the elephants in for the spec, here he comes with the pen all around him trying to mount the elephant. Oh my God. All these people that worked for Felt that have titles, they all come yelling up in my face, "Your pony this." I said, "Whoa, wait a minute. That's not my pony. That's Mr. Felt's pony." He paid 4,000 dollars for it. Ponies were worth about 250 in those days, '88.

[00:48:00] Before we left Japan, he comes he goes, "Pam would you like to buy the pony?" I said, "No thank you. I don't pay that kind of money for ponies. And I've got the other one at home who's already trained." He sold the pony back to the people he bought it from, as a trained pony. He got more for it than what he paid for. I said, "I think I deserve a commission on that at least." You know?

[00:48:30]

Scott O'Donnell: Uh-huh (affirmative).

Pam Rosaire: He did a great job though. I was amazed, at myself even.

Scott O'Donnell: So you worked for a lot of producers over the years. You mentioned Hubert Castle. Talk about a little bit of the other shows you've been on and do you have a favorite show that you've ever been on? And if so, why?

[00:49:00]

Kay Rosaire: I worked on almost every show because besides doing seasons I did a lot of spot dating, which was I preferred to do. I didn't like doing 30 or 40 weeks and 40,000 miles with over nighters and all that. Financially, after doing a couple of seasons on Gatti I realized that I had saved the same amount after a whole season with the wear and tear on the equipment, and the repairs, and the tires, and all of the expenses, all the miles that I was actually better off to get a lot more money for doing spot dates and not do all the miles and all that horrible over nighters and all that. I quit doing seasons really, unless it was a really easy season. For that reason,

[00:49:30]

[00:50:00] my favorite was the Ian Garden Show because we did 4,000 miles in a whole year. They had the best show party. His act got really good money and always beautiful conditions to work. He was always very conscientious about the lighting and the music, and everything was always top class.

Scott O'Donnell: This is Ian Senior you're talking about?

Kay Rosaire: Ian Senior, yeah.

Scott O'Donnell: Yeah.

[00:50:30] Kay Rosaire: I enjoyed many, many seasons up there. Matter of fact, I started out with a mix group with the lions, tigers, jaguars, cougar, and leopards in the act. I'd done three or four seasons with him and he wanted to keep us because we had a great working relationship and I looked pretty good in the ring. He came and he said, "I'd love to keep you but we can't have the same act year after year. Have you thought about changing it and going to bigger cats?" And I actually had wanted to do that because the problem with the leopards and the jaguars, and the small cats is if you're playing these huge big buildings you could hardly see them. They look like dogs. I said, "You know what? I think I would do that." So he gave me a contract for the following year and I went home and replaced all the smaller cats with lions and tigers and came back. When we opened in Cornwall the following early Spring, it was still winter it was 27 degrees in Cornwall, 27 below zero.

[00:51:00] Scott O'Donnell: Miserable [inaudible 00:51:14] too.

[00:51:30] Kay Rosaire: Oh my God. Horrible. You were there weren't you? Remember when the trucks froze to the parking lot? We had to get tow trucks to pull us off the parking lot because all of the vehicles were frozen to the ground. Anyway, that was my first time I worked that group and what a mayhem the first show. They had no idea, because they were all scared of everything. Luckily he was very good about having rehearsals. That was one of the few shows that I went on that actually had a week of rehearsals in a building with all everything the way you want it for a show rather than just saying, "Okay here's the lineup. Go and do it." Because that year they did quite a bit of production stuff and they wanted it right. It was a great way for me to break in a new act and I always wanted to do bigger cats because the little ones are squirrely. It just looked more impressive when you got a 700 pound lion with you instead of a 250 pound leopard. It was easier.

[00:52:00] Scott O'Donnell: Plus you got to be Cleopatra one year.

Kay Rosaire: Yes. Remember that?

Pam Rosaire: Yeah.

Scott O'Donnell: I do.

Pam Rosaire: [Cole Wiser 00:52:23] and his wife's pantyhose.

[00:52:30]

Kay Rosaire: It was funny because actually when little Ian took over that was the year. They had these skinny little Mexican guys [crosstalk 00:52:31]

Pam Rosaire: Gary [Sladek 00:52:32] with the big large ...

Kay Rosaire: Carrying me in on a ...

Pam Rosaire: Next to Cole Wiser. Blue ...

Kay Rosaire: Cleopatra and Sladek doing the, remember he did the gladiator thing? God for him he made it look all right. They had the skinniest skater guys carrying me and poor guys, man. I had put on my winter weight.

Pam Rosaire: Yeah she's like a bear. She hibernates.

Kay Rosaire: Little Ian came up to me. I used to gain 10 pounds in the winter and then lose it in a couple of weeks only beginning of the tour. The first year that young Ian and Rick

[00:53:00]

took over was my last year because they were so bad about taking care of us or the animals, no heat in the building, nowhere to put them overnight. We were loading and it was just bad. The first town he came up to me and goes, "When are you going to lose some weight?" I said, "You talk to me like that and you're going to lose 140 pounds because I'm leaving and going back to Florida.", "Oh no. No don't." He gets all upset.

[00:53:30]

I remember the last day of the first season, which was my last season over there because they were not doing it right. Little Ian asked me if I would come back next year and I said, "Why don't you call me when you grow up and then I'll come back." And he never did. They never did take it in hand. It was what a difference when Ian Senior wasn't there anymore, it was a completely different show.

[00:54:00]

Scott O'Donnell: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Kay Rosaire: They had a lot of fun but they were having way too much fun.

Scott O'Donnell: Then at one point you transitioned into what I'm going to say was a more educational presentation.

Kay Rosaire: Yeah.

Scott O'Donnell: That you were one of the first, to my knowledge, to add talking to the performance and allowing the audience to connect with the trainer.

Kay Rosaire: Yeah. Well that was because that's what my dad did with the horse. It was always a talking act with the horse. My dad was on Circus [Kunee 00:54:29] when the Kunees had incredible horse acts. My dad did a comedy act. He didn't do a great deal of tricks. It was the routine and it was funny and it was fun. So watching him as

[00:54:30]

[00:55:00] a kid I thought, "You know that would be a way to do a cat act." And I wanted to do something different. Originally, when I first started my first cat act I wanted to have a square cage, but nobody was interested in that. They wanted the standard, it's got to be a cage act. "It's got to be a bunch of cats, you're telling me how it should be done." Eventually I said, "Well I did what I had to do to get work."

[00:55:30] When I had enough money put away that I could be more independent and when they started having the microphones like [Mcdonna 00:55:17], was the first one to I think use that cordless mic. I saw that and there was a guy that did high wire on the Vargas show that used a cordless mic and I found out where he got it and all that. I got the cordless mic and I started doing it on fairs. I did educational show on fairs and it was very successful. Matter of fact, I had so many fairs booked after the first season that I hardly needed any circuses. I made more money on the fairs because I could sell my own stuff. I made my own schedule. The agent that booked me was George Moffett and he routed me great so I didn't do a lot of miles. When I went back to circuses I wanted to do the same thing.

[00:56:30] The first guy I worked for again was George Hubler and he goes, "No, no, no, no. No talking in the cat act." Because they were used to the Clyde Beatty, noisy, disruptive, violent kind of cat act. I said, "It's not a day for that anymore. People don't want that.", "Well you can't talk. I don't want you to talk." This was in [Mentor 00:56:27] I think. One of his towns. I said, "I'm going to do it George." He says, "What'd you book, this is what I do. Well I don't know. I don't know if I'm going to like it." I did the act and I came out and he goes, "I like it. You can do it." I said, "Good because I was anyway. You're not telling me what to do George." He was such a character. I really miss George he was so funny.

Scott O'Donnell: Me too.

Kay Rosaire: [00:57:00] One time he came up to me on of the dates and he said, I don't know if you ever saw it but he did the Wizard of Oz production number and it was the worst thing I'd ever seen. I'm not a singer. I can't sing at all. He came up to me and he said, "Kay will you do the Dorothy part? Will you sing in the ..."

Pam Rosaire: Did you have red shoes?

Kay Rosaire: Yeah they had the whole outfit. He said, "Will you do me a favor will you sing in the production? In the spec, will you sing Over the Rainbow?"

Pam Rosaire: With white socks.

Kay Rosaire: [00:57:30] I said, "You're kidding right?" He goes, "No. Will you sing for me?" I go, "Kiss my ass." He goes, "Whatever it takes."

Scott O'Donnell: That's George.

Kay Rosaire: He was such a character. I think he finally got Heidi Harriet to sing or somebody that could sing. They had the whole pool from, the Walmart swimming pool, and

they made the noise. It was just a cardboard house that blew away.

Scott O'Donnell: I have to tell you ...

Kay Rosaire: And then Three Little Pigs and they'd wander off into the crowd because they couldn't see through the heads. It was bad.

[00:58:00]

Pam Rosaire: Oh we had them in Mexico. I think ...

Scott O'Donnell: I have to tell you my ...

Pam Rosaire: My favorite show was in Mexico. [crosstalk 00:58:04]

Kay Rosaire: What's your favorite?

Scott O'Donnell: My favorite story of you in a George Hubler show.

Kay Rosaire: Of me?

Scott O'Donnell: Uh-huh (affirmative).

Kay Rosaire: Yeah. Well ...

Scott O'Donnell: You were in Youngstown.

Kay Rosaire: Oh yeah.

Scott O'Donnell: It was a busy weekend because that's when one of the goofs pulled the cage away [crosstalk 00:58:16]

Kay Rosaire: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah.

Scott O'Donnell: The cat walked out. That was it. You had forgot that your microphone was on or you didn't know your microphone was on. You were saying some great commentary about the chairman.

Kay Rosaire: Yeah. Yeah that was good.

[00:58:30]

Scott O'Donnell: "This guy's a fucking asshole." I remember Hubler, "Find Kay. Find Kay."

Kay Rosaire: Yeah the mic was still on ...

Scott O'Donnell: So everybody's running to find Kay.

Kay Rosaire: And I'm so mad I'm like, "These idiots." I said, "You can't soar like an eagle when you're working with a bunch of turkeys."

Scott O'Donnell: And this is all broadcast into the arena.

Kay Rosaire: Oh through the whole building.

Pam Rosaire: Oh my God.

Scott O'Donnell: [inaudible 00:58:46] I thought, I want to say it was Clayton who found you. Your son. "Mom your microphone's on. They just heard everything you said.", "Well he is an asshole." Click. Then the microphone went off.

Kay Rosaire: You know that guy ...

Scott O'Donnell: I thought it was fabulous.

[00:59:00]

Kay Rosaire: You know what he did? Dolly Jacobs was there. She was the trapeze act, remember?

Scott O'Donnell: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Pam Rosaire: I was there that year too.

Kay Rosaire: He went up to her and said something about her age and she's real sensitive about her age. Nobody knows her age. She was so upset. I mean like crying, almost not going to work. I was like, "Ah who cares. They're all drunk anyway." You know?

Scott O'Donnell: Right.

Kay Rosaire: But he was a jerk that guy. He was mean, remember?

Scott O'Donnell: Oh miserable.

[00:59:30]

Kay Rosaire: But those were great dates.

Scott O'Donnell: They were great dates. No doubt about it. Your favorite, you just started to say?

Pam Rosaire: [Atidee 00:59:37].

Scott O'Donnell: Atidee.

Pam Rosaire: Mexico. I had a wonderful, I spent three seasons down there.

Scott O'Donnell: Uh-huh (affirmative).

Pam Rosaire: Absolutely loved it. I used ride my pony to the mercado to buy my chimp food.

Scott O'Donnell: Nice.

Pam Rosaire: It was like going back in time, you know?

Scott O'Donnell: Yeah.

Pam Rosaire: When you didn't have vehicles. It was awesome. I loved it. I had so much fun there.
[01:00:00] [Dagmar 00:59:57] was there with me. Me and her had all kinds of ... It was a blast.
One time we had an early show and we didn't have a late show, we didn't have an
[01:00:30] early show the next day we had a late show. We decide we're going to go over to
the United States, because we're like 60 miles from the border. We get on a bus
and go. Now Dagmar she brings a big bottle of tequila. We get all drunk on the bus,
get across the border, and we were a mess. Especially Dagmar. We go call
everybody we got to call. I went to call Roger of course. Now we go back to get
[01:01:00] back on the bus and Dagmar has blown her purse with all her, to get back into
Mexico. We managed to talk our way into that one and get back across. We didn't
get back to the lot until like half hour before the show. It was like, Dagmar she was
crying, and laughing, and still drunk, and she's a wire walker.

Scott O'Donnell: Must've been an interesting show.

Pam Rosaire: The [Atidees 01:01:25] had people out looking for us. They called and [inaudible
[01:01:30] 01:01:29]. We were missing in action, but it was so funny. One time, this is in
Mexico City when Scooter was with us. Scooter used to do the [Herman 01:01:46]
and Petunia with Roger. Roger and I go out between shows to the mercado
[01:02:00] because we were out of chimp food and we just had to go do it real quick. It wasn't
that far away. You get on the subway for it, well we got lost on the subway. So now
there's Wayne and Scooter doing Herman and Petunia, because Roger's not back.
Wayne, my cousin with the pig racer, right?

Scott O'Donnell: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Pam Rosaire: We finally get back to the building and we go in and we can hear Herman and
Petunia's on and I'm like, "You see. You see I told you we didn't have time." Me and
[01:02:30] Roger are fighting now. He goes running out there and they're doing a bit where
Petunia breaks the boobs right and she's in the seats doing all the [pratt 01:02:42]
falls and that. The announcer sees Roger standing in the alleyway. Herman's yelling,
"[Spanish 01:02:52] Petunia?" The announcer goes, "Oh [Spanish 01:02:58]. Got
[01:03:00] lost in the market." Instead of he got lost in the seats. Poor Roger, he never lived
that down the rest of the season. Man, we used to have [Don 01:03:10] go buy the
monkey food for the shows. From then on they had it delivered so we didn't have
to go out.

Kay Rosaire: So fun though it's always great [crosstalk 01:03:24]

Pam Rosaire: [inaudible 01:03:24]

Kay Rosaire: Being on any of the shows. I loved the Vargas Show when I was there they still had

[01:03:30] 18 elephants.

Pam Rosaire: He was still good when I was there.

Kay Rosaire: It was awesome. It was a great show.

Pam Rosaire: Yeah.

Kay Rosaire: He was a character. Oh my gosh.

Scott O'Donnell: I was just going to say, tell us a little about Cliff.

Kay Rosaire: Oh he was crazy [crosstalk 01:03:42]

Pam Rosaire: I have some great Cliff stories.

Kay Rosaire: Crazy as hell. The first time I was on the show he wanted to feature me on the show. He's going to put picture of me on all the trucks. I was going to be the
[01:04:00] Gunther Gebel Williams of the Vargas Show. He was going to build my name and promote me and all of that. I asked for a 200 dollar raise and he said, "Get your shit and get off my lot right now. You should be proud to be over here." I said, "I am but I want more money." He tried to fire me and I said, "I don't ..." [crosstalk 01:04:16]

Pam Rosaire: Well he used to do that every time he got mad at you ...

Kay Rosaire: I said, "You can fire me right now."

Pam Rosaire: He'd fire you.

Kay Rosaire: After he just gave me all this, telling me how great I was. I said, "You can fire me but you've got to pay me the balance of my contract." I ended up finishing my
[01:04:30] contract and the day that I left he was crying. He was physical crying but he was so stubborn that he was not going to give me that extra 200 dollars. Years later when I went back in the 90s, it was a whole different show. He was so happy to have me back and he treated me great, but it was a hard show. I mean you don't have a day off the whole season and if you do you got to go a thousand miles. It's not an easy show but it was a fun show because they really put on a nice show.

[01:05:00]

Pam Rosaire: He got mad at me because I wouldn't wear that, he wanted me to wear that hat with the fruit on it and the boobs hanging out everywhere. I go, "I'm not wearing that stuff." He goes, "Well why not?" I said, "Because it's not my style. I look like an idiot." I said, "And I'm not flaunting my boobs. I work animals not boobs." So they made somebody else do it. Well that kind of stuck in his craw you know?

Scott O'Donnell: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Pam Rosaire: Right into it I wore my own stuff. I don't like that.

[01:05:30]

Kay Rosaire: He was a funny guy. He was very, very emotional.

Pam Rosaire: The next thing you know we're in LA. They got the Tonight Show booked. They want me to go on the Tonight Show and do part of my act and do the interview. Well I already did the Tonight Show years ago with Carson and I said, "Wait a minute. I don't do that kind of stuff for free. I get paid for the Tonight Show.", "No, no, no. You have to do this. That's part of the deal when you work here." I said, [01:06:00] "Then I guess I don't work here anymore because I'm not doing it." He was so mad. "Well pack your shit and get off my lot."

Kay Rosaire: Oh he used to do all the time.

Pam Rosaire: "Fine. Fine then." So we pack up and go to a trailer park. Next thing you know here comes [Muscarelo 01:06:17]. "Pam you can't leave like this." I said, "He told me to get my shit off the lot so I did.", "But you can't leave. He's changed his mind." I said, [01:06:30] "Well I haven't." I said, "I can't put up with this. You guys always want me to do little extra things and you don't want to pay me for it. This isn't my hobby it's my line of work." So next thing you know here comes Vargas. "Please. I, I didn't mean to be so abrupt." I said, "Well okay. I didn't either." I said, "But you know, things happen." I said, "But you can't bully me ever." I said, "I'm not bullyable."

Kay Rosaire: It's funny because a lot of these producers got away with bullying a lot of people.

Pam Rosaire: The next time ...

[01:07:00]

Kay Rosaire: We never put up it. I always used to say, "I'm going to go home to Florida and go fishing." Then they would not hassle you. It was like every show that you went on you had to establish that you were not going to take abuse, you were not going to be disrespected, and you wanted things right. Because we had a reputation for being that way, nobody gave us any problems. Nobody. There were some rumors that were not right. When I worked for George Carden who's a real difficult person, [01:07:30] at that time very difficult to work for because he had a huge show, lots of weeks. Everybody wanted to work there because it was a great season. There was a rumor, he tried to bully me, wanted me to live with him first and I refused him. It was a man scorned. Then eventually he was just really hard on me because he was upset that I wasn't interested in him. We were in this one town ...

Pam Rosaire: That's why he wanted you to live with him right?

[01:08:00]

Kay Rosaire: I guess. I don't know what, he's you know, you know George. Anyway, he ... I totally forgot what I was getting at. Oh. He would bully other people and I can't stand that. I used to hate that. He would pick on somebody mercilessly. Make them do things they didn't want to do just to humiliate them. I would stand up for them and I got in a big beef with him in [Su 01:08:23] Saint Marie. I told him off in the building in

[01:08:30] front of everybody. It went around, it was not a big deal, and he came and apologized. He came to my trailer, stood outside in the rain, apologizing to me for talking to me like that. I didn't leave the show but when that story, a year later, I heard that I beat him up in the building and it was nothing like that. It was weird because we little bit got a reputation of being tough on producers but we never were. We always got along great with them.

Scott O'Donnell: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[01:09:00]

Kay Rosaire: Because we respected each other and demand the same. I never did one season on any show. I always did multiple seasons so you can tell that you had a good working relationship because everybody wanted you back. I never looked for work. I always ...

Pam Rosaire: I punched Bob [Atterbury 01:09:17] in the nose once.

Kay Rosaire: Oh he was, is he dead yet?

Pam Rosaire: Dirty pig. He's a pig.

[01:09:30]

Kay Rosaire: He was a pedophile. He was a rude person and not respectable in any way. Got away with it apparently for a long time over there because he was some kind of power broker apparently. He used to do terrible things to people. He was a crook. He was a strange guy because he was a Catholic and he used to go to church in every town.

Pam Rosaire: He had to pray for his sins.

Kay Rosaire: Yeah. He was trying to make up for being so evil.

Pam Rosaire: Pig.

Kay Rosaire: He would give them gold coins.

Pam Rosaire: Smells like taco.

[01:10:00]

Kay Rosaire: To the churches. Yeah. He was not a good character. He used to ...

Pam Rosaire: He grossed me out.

Kay Rosaire: Take money off of people ...

Pam Rosaire: He grabbed me ...

Kay Rosaire: On the show.

Pam Rosaire: He grabbed me and he kissed me and he'd been eating a taco and it was like [eugh 01:10:10]. I punched him right in the face.

Kay Rosaire: See that's why you got a reputation for hitting people.

Pam Rosaire: And he goes, "I'm going to speak to your dad right now." I said, "Good I hope you do because he's going to knock the crap out of you." He went and told my dad and my dad knocked him right on his ass. Boom.

[01:10:30]

Kay Rosaire: They were kind of like a criminal element over there. They used to tell ...

Pam Rosaire: He was bad.

Kay Rosaire: They used to get people that came over from Europe, unsuspecting people, and they thought that's what it was. They would tell people how much they had to give as a tip for the crew, but they never gave it to the crew. They stole the money. They did it to my dad and my dad said, "I'm not doing that. If I want to tip I'll give it to whoever is helping me. That's the whole idea of a tip." He had to literally and we

[01:11:00] were all little kids. This was like the first season we were in ...

Pam Rosaire: Ray Miranda was his bully back then ...

Kay Rosaire: He had to stand there and ...

Pam Rosaire: [Mudplucker 01:11:04] another ...

Kay Rosaire: Tell all these guys ...

Pam Rosaire: Sweet person.

Kay Rosaire: "Come on. Come one lets, if you think you can take me come on take me." They didn't, they left him alone after that. They never tried to strong arm him again but they did it to a lot of people.

Pam Rosaire: First time we met Bob Atterbury it was at the docks right when we got off the ship. Came to pick us up and he had odd socks on and odd shoes.

Kay Rosaire: Odd shoes.

[01:11:30]

Pam Rosaire: He had a cigar stub in his mouth and his nose was running all over it. I said, "Dad I think we might've made a mistake coming to American." Just looking at him, you know? I said, "Is this who we're working for? Look at his shoes." [crosstalk 01:11:45]

Kay Rosaire: Yeah he was a pretty ...

Pam Rosaire: My mother's, "Oh my Lord."

Kay Rosaire: Pretty disgusting guy.

Pam Rosaire: "Oh my goodness."

Kay Rosaire: [01:12:00] The weirdest thing, about 20 years ago, I'm driving along the freeway near Orlando and somebody passes me and I look over and it was Bob Atterbury. He had a truck with a bunch of scrap iron and stuff he probably stole from somebody on his truck. I thought, "God he's still alive after all those years." He must've been 80.

Pam Rosaire: I'm surprised nobody killed him. He's mean.

Kay Rosaire: I'm sure they tried.

Pam Rosaire: I saw him kick a little kid's teeth right out of his mouth. I never liked him after that. I always wanted to like ...

Kay Rosaire: Yeah they were like thugs. They had a whole crew of thugs.

[01:12:30]

Pam Rosaire: I mean little kid he was probably about nine year old kid. In Harrisburg.

Kay Rosaire: It was very different ...

Pam Rosaire: Little black kid ...

Kay Rosaire: Coming to the U.S. from Europe because in Europe you were treated really nice.

Pam Rosaire: And then all these guys come looking for him.

Kay Rosaire: There was none of that, no chicanery you know?

Pam Rosaire: I told him where he was staying. "In that hotel across the street."

Scott O'Donnell: You've both worked animals over the years. Give us a little commentary about how society and the business has changed with animals.

[01:13:00]

Kay Rosaire: Well that was why I started doing the educational show on the fairs because I wanted people to know that animals that we're working with have a name, have a personality, have affection for us, that they mean a lot to us, that we love them, that they're with us for their whole life. They're not a piece of equipment. That's how people thought of it because back in the day when you had all these guys that were not real animal people, they just got the job of being in the animal

[01:13:30] department, they called animals stock. A lot of them didn't even give them a name, but in our generation it's very different. I got my animals as young animals. I raised

them, they had an affection for me, mutual affection. I wanted people to see that because it gives you a distorted view when you think that the trainers are the subjugators.

[01:14:00] It's like Clyde Beatty style. They hate that and I hate that. I think it's horrible and unacceptable. It was never like that in England because we had the RSPCA before there was such a thing as animal rights. They had rules and you had to have a license to train animals you couldn't just declare yourself an animal trainer. You had to be certified. They had to come and watch you and see your methods. You were not allowed to abuse animals.

Pam Rosaire: You had to have a license.

Kay Rosaire: [01:14:30] You had to have a license. If you'd had any infractions, like being too rough with an animal, abusing an animal, not taking care of an animal, you lose your license and you're done. You can't work animals anymore. You're not allowed to do it. That's the standards that my dad grew up with. Of course working in theaters where your audience is right there, there's no abusing, or hitting, or being tough on any animal. Even the dogs in the dog act. You had to be sweet to them. When I started that was my whole perspective was different and I wanted the audiences to see that because they were not seeing that. They were seeing beautiful animals working, and lots of whips, and a different way of presenting it. Gunther Gebel Williams was a better more gentile trainer. He was good to his animals. They loved him. I wanted people to know that so that's why I wanted to do the microphone thing.

[01:15:00] Well as it evolved, now you have to be even more open to show them how you train. That's why I started the habitat and started taking in animals that needed a home. Of course as we became more aware of the fact that animals are becoming extinct. I mean when Pam started with chimps, my dad traded the first chimp that he got, he traded a carton of cigarettes for. Now the chimps are over 80,000 dollars for a chimp, if you can find one. They're not available because the wild ones are gone and there's nobody breeding them in captivity. There's just not the availability of the animals so if you have an animal you got to really do it right. Otherwise you're going to lose it, it's going to be confiscated. The habitat in Sarasota that I started with my dad, about 25 years ago, we wanted people to come in and watch us train. Then we had rescued a bunch of animals and we wanted people to come in and see them. Eventually then finally we had so many.

[01:16:00] Well as it evolved, now you have to be even more open to show them how you train. That's why I started the habitat and started taking in animals that needed a home. Of course as we became more aware of the fact that animals are becoming extinct. I mean when Pam started with chimps, my dad traded the first chimp that he got, he traded a carton of cigarettes for. Now the chimps are over 80,000 dollars for a chimp, if you can find one. They're not available because the wild ones are gone and there's nobody breeding them in captivity. There's just not the availability of the animals so if you have an animal you got to really do it right. Otherwise you're going to lose it, it's going to be confiscated. The habitat in Sarasota that I started with my dad, about 25 years ago, we wanted people to come in and watch us train. Then we had rescued a bunch of animals and we wanted people to come in and see them. Eventually then finally we had so many.

[01:16:30] Back in '07 when the economy tanked, all the people around Florida were losing their property, losing their farms, and people that had private collections of exotics suddenly have nowhere to go with them. You can't rent a house and bring a monkey or a tiger with you. So we suddenly had this huge influx, so then that's when we became a nonprofit. You know lo and behold, I mean there's nothing spectacular about our place, but what brings people there is the fact that they get to see us actually in with the animals, working with the animals, and there's a thirst for that now. I could see it here when you do your shows. The tiger guy had a full crowd and they loved it. The show had a full crowd and they loved the dog act and they love the elephant act. People really have a thirst to see good animal acts and

[01:17:00]

there's nothing wrong with it.

[01:17:30] There's a right way and a wrong way of doing everything. People that are doing it the right way are still surviving, they're still making a good living, they're still taking proper care of their animals and it's a good thing.

Pam Rosaire: I used to go an act with six chimps and lots of tricks. Now I do a talking act with one chimp.

Kay Rosaire: People love it.

Pam Rosaire: They love it.

Kay Rosaire: They're so fascinated.

Pam Rosaire: And he's a character. He's an actor.

Kay Rosaire: He's the only chimp in this country, only working chimp in this county.

Pam Rosaire: Yeah.

[01:18:00]

Kay Rosaire: The only one doing commercials, and movie work, and all of that.

Pam Rosaire: He's got a lot of stuff on YouTube. You should look at it. He's got his own page on Facebook.

Scott O'Donnell: Oh yeah?

Pam Rosaire: Chance Rosaire. It's awesome. All his commercials are on there.

Kay Rosaire: But that's what's made our place a success is that they know that we have shows. They email us and say, "What time are the shows? When are the shows? When are you doing the training?" When we do our stuff at the habitat, we're explaining why, how do we get them to do that, we just bribe them to do it and after they do it to please you. You don't even have to bribe them anymore. They'll just do it because they want to make you happy and make you say, "Good girl. Good boy." Or give them a hug. It's all about affection. There's no domination. If anything, they're dominating us now.

[01:18:30]

Pam Rosaire: That was the most popular thing about my chimp act when I worked all my big chimps, because they were really big the first bunch that you knew, right? They were as tall as I am. They were always hugging on me and kissing me during the act. That meant a lot to people.

[01:19:00]

Scott O'Donnell: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Kay Rosaire: You can't fake that.

Pam Rosaire: No.

Kay Rosaire: You can't beat an animal into loving you. You've got to love them into loving you. That's what opens people's hearts. Because a lot of people have pets now, everyone's got a dog or a cat, or some pet and they now are teaching their animals. They're going to these agility for dogs is huge right now because people are getting into training their own animals. If only they'd train their children to behave, it would be an amazing world. They don't put the time and effort [crosstalk 01:19:38]

[01:19:30]

Pam Rosaire: I was the most played act ...

Kay Rosaire: Into the kids as they do to their pet.

Pam Rosaire: In Medinah, because of the response from the public about the chimps. They saw them grow up there. Actually the first time I ever worked my older group was at Medinah. They were all little babies then.

Scott O'Donnell: Wow.

Pam Rosaire: So people remembered them from when they were little tiny babies through when they were bigger than me, carrying me on the stage and stuff. It got a lot of feedback for all those years. Amazing.

[01:20:00]

Scott O'Donnell: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Kay Rosaire: Even in our place, people know the names of the animals. They come particularly to see one. We'll get emails saying how's so and so doing? It's fun.

Pam Rosaire: That's sad now when you go to Chicago. The building is a store now. They still have my door there. They used to call it the monkey door, because I always parked at that door. I couldn't take it. I can't even go in there.

[01:20:30]

Kay Rosaire: It's a funny thing because nobody's caring that circuses are disappearing and that animal acts are ... There aren't any animal acts. It's really hard to find an animal act now. We did our animal extravaganza. If it wasn't for our family's acts and a couple other friends that have animal acts, there are no animal acts to be found.

Scott O'Donnell: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[01:21:00]

Pam Rosaire: There's no up and coming that's for sure.

Kay Rosaire: And people really miss it. I mean you go to a circus with no animals and I mean you can be fancy and have all your special effects and your sound and all of that, but to this day the most popular acts on any show are always the ... Because the kids like animal acts. They love to see a dog act. They can relate to it. The most successful shows that I was ever on, and all of us were ever on, were shows that were heavy

[01:21:30] on the animals. The Hamid show, every other act was an animal act, a riding act, sea lion. Always something. Those shows were phenomenal. Like Ringling, I mean they took the elephants off the show, I think it's not a circus anymore. The tigers are about to go. Now it's an ice show, I mean we've got ice shows.

Pam Rosaire: [01:22:00] That's what made me decide to vote for Trump, because he said he'll no longer attend the Ringling show as long as there's no elephants or other animals in the show.

Scott O'Donnell: 40 years from now when a lecturer listens to this you might be prophetic ...

Kay Rosaire: Yeah.

Pam Rosaire: Yeah.

Scott O'Donnell: You're talking the next ...

Kay Rosaire: Yeah. I'm hoping that they'll come back because certainly there's, we're so heavily regulated that it's not an issue of who's being abusive. You can't. I mean everything is under a microscope. My cousin David with his dog act, he has to keep a log, which dog pooped at what time and you know they're very, very conscientious about following all the regulations. The animals have down time. We don't over work them. We won't do four shows. We seldom will do three shows. When we did our fair show we didn't do three shows every day. We did two on the week and three on the weekend, because it's too much for the animals. It's too hard and it's too good for them. They have to let us have our rules. People have to stand up for that. If you're doing it right, you have a proper facility for the animals backstage where they can have an exercise area. There was nothing wrong.

[01:22:30] My animals that I work for most of my career, all of those cats lived into their late 20s. That's twice as long as in the wild. That's because they had proper clean water all the time, proper care. I used to rent places to set up and practice or let them play. You remember? People used to say, "What are you doing?", "Well I'm letting them play." They need to move around. You can't put them in a box and leave them there just because you're not working for a couple of weeks. I would drive all the way back to Florida to our winter quarters and let them play in their habitats.

[01:23:30] We built habitats as soon as I had the money to do it, I build habitats. That's why I had the same animals, and same with Pam the same chimps, for 40, 50 years because we take good care of them. People on the outside that listen [crosstalk 01:23:52]

Pam Rosaire: Still got flack.

[01:24:00] Kay Rosaire: To these animal activists, have no clue how well we're doing. The most common cause of death in trained animals is old age. Not health or anything, it's old age because that's your living, that's your livelihood. You've got hours and hours, hundreds of hours, of training. You can't replace that animal in a day or two. You

[01:24:30] have to have that animal to make your living and that's why they get such excellent care. If people only knew the reality of what we do and didn't listen to this propaganda that these crooks, and they are crooks. HSUS, PETA, all of these groups, it's not about animals. They have no affinity. They don't really care about the human animal bond. It's only about financials and they're making so much money off of this TV ads that they do. It's so corrupt. They raise [crosstalk 01:24:48]

Pam Rosaire: They have the dogs and the ..

Kay Rosaire: Millions of dollars a year ...

Pam Rosaire: Scabby eyes and a whole bunch ...

Kay Rosaire: HSUS right now ...

Pam Rosaire: It's disgusting isn't it?

Kay Rosaire: Has 17 million in ...

Pam Rosaire: If they can film it why can't they fix it?

[01:25:00]
Kay Rosaire: They have 17 million in their own retirement fund. We thought it was 24 million in offshore accounts in the Cayman Islands. They actually have over 50 million of tax free money that they've lied to people and taken the money to serve these illicit purposes. All they do is spend it on lobbyists. They're not doing anything to help animals. Very rarely do you hear of something that they've actually done that was a good idea.

[01:25:30]
Pam Rosaire: Well they're all zealous about animals and there's little kids living under bridges that have got no supervision from adults or ...

Kay Rosaire: There's all those kids living in the cars.

Pam Rosaire: There's homeless kids everywhere.

Kay Rosaire: It's a crazy thing. People are so gullible, these acts. Now they're doing it with kids on TV. Have you seen the ads for the feed the children and stuff? They use the same technique that the animal rights people are doing. "You send 15 dollars a month and we're going to do miracles."

Pam Rosaire: Yeah.

[01:26:00]
Kay Rosaire: I think 3% of it goes to the charity. It's just insane.

Pam Rosaire: They should spend some of that money worming those kids. They all got the blown

up parasite bellies, it's terrible.

Scott O'Donnell: I'm always curious, for great performers such as yourself, you worked with so many people over the years. What's another great performer that you enjoyed working with or that you saw that it was like, "Oh if that act's on, I want to go take a peek."

[01:26:30]

Kay Rosaire: Oh some of the great animal acts that I've worked with. I used to watch Janette Ricks' father with the bears.

Scott O'Donnell: Albert?

Kay Rosaire: Albert Ricks. That was amazing. Those huge polar bears. Eloise Berchtold who unfortunately was killed by an elephant. She was an amazing trainer. I mean she was not a great performer. I watched her act one time and it was so long that people weren't even watching, but the stuff she did was just unbelievable. For me I always watch the ... I mean I love the good aerialists and anybody that was outstanding. Luckily my career was at the same time there were still some great acts. I mean acts like the Colmettes. Acts to this day if you saw them you'd be like, "Wow." It seemed like over the last 20 years it all become, especially when the Iron Curtain came down, then you get all the jump rope people and the hula hoops.

[01:27:30]

Scott O'Donnell: Hula hoops.

Pam Rosaire: Oh God.

Kay Rosaire: If I never see another what do you call it? Cloth silk.

Scott O'Donnell: Uh-huh (affirmative).

Kay Rosaire: If I never see another silk act I'll be happy.

Pam Rosaire: I hate seeing men do silks.

Kay Rosaire: I could choke on a silk.

Pam Rosaire: It's so not right.

Kay Rosaire: I saw a guy do a hula hoop act recently and I was like ...

Pam Rosaire: It's just something [crosstalk 01:27:49]

Kay Rosaire: It seems like ...

Pam Rosaire: About it.

Kay Rosaire: They were great cradle acts and ...

Pam Rosaire: Its like contortionists.

Kay Rosaire: Great aerial acts.

Pam Rosaire: Men contortionists.

Kay Rosaire: Yeah it's kind of weird.

Pam Rosaire: It's not nice.

[01:28:00]

Kay Rosaire: But we worked with some amazing acts.

Pam Rosaire: Girls are bad enough.

Kay Rosaire: The old teeterboard acts and stuff, oh my gosh.

Pam Rosaire: On their head.

Scott O'Donnell: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Kay Rosaire: I love to watch Gunther because his relationship with the animals was so cool.

Pam Rosaire: It was like they need to wear pants when they do that. I hate those kind of acts. I mean my favorite performer to watch was Gunther because no matter what he did, he did it awesomely well. The only thing he was no good at, and he told me this himself, they got some orangutans and they wanted him to train them and he couldn't do it. Then they got rid of the orangutans and got him chimps and they were even worse. He goes, "I stink with chimps." I said, "Well I'm glad."

[01:28:30]

Kay Rosaire: But he was a very dynamic performer.

Pam Rosaire: He was awesome.

Kay Rosaire: I remember the first time ...

Pam Rosaire: He was so down to Earth.

[01:29:00]

Kay Rosaire: I saw him the first time come down the track roaming riding on two white horses in Cleveland. I was still in high school. I saw that and I was like, "Oh my gosh." To me he was such a dynamic exciting performer. There haven't been any like him since really.

Pam Rosaire: He could do anything. He was a fabulous acrobat as well.

Scott O'Donnell: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Kay Rosaire: Well that's why he got the ...

Pam Rosaire: He was a groom when I ...

Kay Rosaire: Acclaim that did.

Pam Rosaire: First met him.

Kay Rosaire: He was great.

[01:29:30]

Pam Rosaire: It was in France in Medrano. He was the groom for the Williams family. He was probably be about 18 then. He was immaculate taking care of the horses and stuff. Used to wet their straw and roll it up behind him so it stayed all neat. It takes effort to make things look that good.

Scott O'Donnell: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[01:30:00]

Pam Rosaire: I used to chop up carrots and little things and sell them in [managere 01:30:01]. He goes, "Who said you could do that?" I said, "I did. I didn't ask anybody." He goes, "they're not going to allow you to do that." I said, "What are you going to tell?" He goes, "No." I said, "Well then you see nothing." I continued to do it. Then eventually management found out about it and they wanted a piece of the action. I got first count. I was only a kid, I got away with murder.

[01:30:30]

Kay Rosaire: There was another guy that was called Danny Rance. You probably heard the story.

Pam Rosaire: Alfred killed him.

Kay Rosaire: Yeah. He was killed by an elephant. He went in the trailer and it smashed the trailer. He was a beautiful performer too. He did Robin Hood on the bareback horse. He was a bareback rider and he was phenomenal. He was very successful. He had his own show. He was a great performer. There've been a lot of great performers, but not the ones you would think that we would admired. Not the famous aerialist. Not them they just-

[01:31:00]

Pam Rosaire: Yeah but they haven't got the quality of acts now that they had back then. They really had some good acts back in the old days. Amazing stuff.

Kay Rosaire: There's not a demand for them. There's no names. We used to be even on the Ringling show, there was performers that had a name and they announced them. Over the last few years they didn't announce who anybody was. It was no reason for you to promote yourself because there was no names. You might as well just do average stuff. One thing I noticed, when we were kids with my parents on shows back in the 60s in that era, when you went in the building in the morning everybody was in there practicing. The kids were practicing, doing tumbling. Practicing aerial acts. It was a lot of practicing. Over the last 10 years of my career,

[01:31:30]

[01:32:00]

which was 10 years ago, nobody practiced. They all did easy stuff that didn't require a lot of training or practicing and the acts show it. You could see it. There was no finesse. Nothing really powerful. Nothing you'd say, "Oh have you seen that act?" Very seldom happens now.

[01:32:30]

Scott O'Donnell: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Pam Rosaire: It's a shame.

Kay Rosaire: There's a few grizzly acts now.

Pam Rosaire: End of an era.

Kay Rosaire: There's two [Anestine 01:32:35] boys that have a terrific act. There's a few notable acts, but nothing like in the old days when it was a whole ... You look at some of the old programs and you read the names and you're like, "Oh the Fellow boys and Dodo. The [Almaynas 01:32:50]." These terrific acts that just don't exist anymore.

[01:33:00] Nobody has the oomph to do it because there's not a great deal of good work out there where you're going to get good money for doing an amazing act. Some of the acts coming in from Europe are pretty good, but nothing in the youngsters today. A lot of them don't even do acts. They're all doing other things. They've quit because the circuses are disappearing. It's one of those things where when it's all gone they're going to say, "Why did we let that go away? Why is the best form of family entertainment gone?" Because nobody cared. Nobody bothered.

[01:33:30]

Pam Rosaire: That's because we all got sawdust in our veins and none of them do.

Kay Rosaire: Well that's the difference. Once the walls came down, the Eastern Block people, you got all these people coming over that are from gymnasiums and from circus schools. There's no heritage. There's no feeling of the industry or pride in your heritage anymore. I was on shows the last couple of years that I didn't know the people. They were not circus people. They were just acrobats or former Olympians.

[01:34:00]

Pam Rosaire: Well you don't have the back yard life that we used to either. You know?

Scott O'Donnell: Right.

Pam Rosaire: It used to be fun. Everybody used to have barbecues and socialize at the end of the day, but now that doesn't happen anymore.

Kay Rosaire: Yup. It's a different era.

Pam Rosaire: Acts barely talk to each other. The Mongolians hate the Mexicans. The Mexicans hate the Chinese. The whites hate all of them. It's like ridiculous.

[01:34:30]

Kay Rosaire: Yeah. The parties, like the parties we used to have with real circus people, they were funny and fun. I love circus people. There's no people like circus people, real

circus people. The families.

Pam Rosaire: Yeah.

Kay Rosaire: It's such a loss. You know another part of it is like my grandparents, both sides of my family, they had eight children. Four boys and four girls. I had one kid. She had one kid. There is no ...
[01:35:00]

Pam Rosaire: I got married too late.

Kay Rosaire: Yeah we were too busy.

Pam Rosaire: I had too many chimps to have time to have a relationship. Poor Roger. We've been together 40 some years. It's hard to believe. His dad kept telling, "It's never going to work. That's a bitch." I showed him who a bitch is though. Call me a bitch, I'll be one. "It's never going to work. You need someone like Anita." Well Anita and Dennis didn't last very long.
[01:35:30]

Kay Rosaire: You know the bad thing is I personally still think there's room in this country for a great circus with great animal acts and great performers. A great stage to work on and all the facilities that they have it. I mean if you produced a show that looked like that but had the depth and excitement of a real circus. That's what was so cool about it. You never knew what was going to happen.
[01:36:00]

Scott O'Donnell: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Kay Rosaire: That's why we all watched the show. We didn't go back to our trailers. We were in the building because there were so many variables you didn't know what was going to happen. Shows aren't like that now. They're so choreographed and structured that there's no room for any variation. It's just boring. I think that's what we're missing in circuses now. I really do. I mean I see people when we have our show, when we do our animal show, people come out they're laughing, and smiling, and happy, and enjoyed it and we'll see you next year. We did a six week run. We had people that came to see the same show three or four times. They said [crosstalk 01:36:51]
[01:36:30]

Pam Rosaire: I enjoyed being on [Walker 01:36:53] Brothers.

Kay Rosaire: "Oh it's never quite the same with the animals."

Pam Rosaire: Little mud show, I enjoyed it. I loved it.

Scott O'Donnell: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

[01:37:00]

Pam Rosaire: First year I worked there I worked for free because they couldn't afford to pay me.

Kay Rosaire: Yeah it's really ...

Pam Rosaire: I just kept helping them [crosstalk 01:37:07]

Kay Rosaire: See like [inaudible 01:37:08]

Pam Rosaire: I helped them set the tent up and everything.

Kay Rosaire: These little family circus. They're doing very well.

Scott O'Donnell: Right.

Pam Rosaire: Seating tents.

Kay Rosaire: They're making money. They're happy and people love it and wait for it.

Pam Rosaire: Made me feel like I was a kid again. It was fun.

Kay Rosaire: The bygone era.

Pam Rosaire: Yeah.

Scott O'Donnell: Well before we wrap up, is there anything else that you want to share with anybody?

Kay Rosaire: No.

Scott O'Donnell: Nothing you thought we'd ask that we didn't?

[01:37:30]

Kay Rosaire: I don't think so.

Pam Rosaire: I think everyone's days should be circus days.

Scott O'Donnell: I agree.

Pam Rosaire: Come to Baraboo and look at everything and reminisce, because it's gone.

Kay Rosaire: I'm so happy that you have elephants and cats here. I think it's great. I think you should continue to do it because you're not going to see them anywhere else.

Scott O'Donnell: Right.

Kay Rosaire: That's what I've been saying myself too. I might even get elephants next winter for the whole winter because where are people going to go see it? Where are you going to go ride an elephant? You know?

[01:38:00]

Scott O'Donnell: Right.

Kay Rosaire: We actually get emails, "You guys have elephants we can ride? Do you have elephants?" They want to see them. If you see an elephant at a zoo it's just not the same, because they're usually off in the distance chewing on something. They're not physically moving or ...

Scott O'Donnell: Right.

Kay Rosaire: It's just crazy.

Pam Rosaire: Yesterday I went by the elephants and one was laying down and the other one was climbing on it, playing, it was so cute.

Scott O'Donnell: Uh-huh (affirmative).

[01:38:30]

Pam Rosaire: Yeah you don't expect that from old animals. They were being naughty.

Scott O'Donnell: Well thank you both.

Kay Rosaire: Oh it's a pleasure. What a wonderful place this is. What a treasure. If ever there's anything we can do, you know? I don't know what we could do, but I sure hope this place continues for future generations to enjoy. Such a jewel.

Scott O'Donnell: Agreed.

Kay Rosaire: I'm so glad I came after all these years.

Scott O'Donnell: I know right.

[01:39:00]

Kay Rosaire: I know it's amazing. The last time I was here there was none of this.

Pam Rosaire: We came here in 1963 I believe it was, with my mom and dad. We pulled into the back way over there. Johnny Harriett was the one that invited us over.

Scott O'Donnell: Uh-huh (affirmative).

[01:39:30]

Pam Rosaire: Him and Mary Ruth were having a fist fight in the backyard. My dad taught me the [inaudible 01:39:31] laugh.

Kay Rosaire: "All right. We're going."

Pam Rosaire: "All right we can't, they're busy right now."

Kay Rosaire: My dad was funny like that. He didn't want any problems. We went to Florida and everything was great. We were thrilled to be there, yet we were staying at somebody else's place. He had the horse all set up and everything. Then we had

this huge rainstorm and the fire ants got on the horse and bit him all over.

Pam Rosaire: That was terrible.

[01:40:00]

Kay Rosaire: And he had bumps everywhere. Within 10 minutes we were loaded up and leaving. He's like, "Right let's go. We're out of here."

Pam Rosaire: [Willy 01:40:07] the horse.

Scott O'Donnell: Uh-huh (affirmative).

Pam Rosaire: That was bad. He got real sick from it.

Kay Rosaire: Yeah he did. I remember all of it. All the Harriet girls were like little girls, little kids when we were here.

Pam Rosaire: Little tarts. Little tiny tarts.