

## CWM Audio 70-2

### Dinny McGuire Interview, July 20, 2017

#### Part 1

Interview conducted by Nancy Davies

Nancy Davies: Nancy Davies, interviewing Denny McGuire, Ringling oral history, on July 20th, no! 2017. Wow, going back in time.

Dinny McGuire: Girl, you'd be old. Not as old as me, but old.

Nancy Davies: All right, here we go.

Dinny McGuire: It's going to be a bumpy ride.

Nancy Davies: All right Denny McGuire.

Dinny McGuire: Yes.

[00:00:30]

Nancy Davies: Tell me just a brief overview before we get into all of the details of your history-

Dinny McGuire: Assorted details.

Nancy Davies: Of your history with Ringling. What did you do?

Dinny McGuire: Well, I was the ring master from December 27th, was my opening show, 1981, there in Venice, Florida. Through the end of 85, and then I did Circus Fantasy for Kenneth at Disney Land in 88. I don't know, somewhere in the late ... Then Kenneth said, "Hey, how would you like to go to Japan with the new Gold Unit?" So, I went to Japan in 88 with the Gold Unit. I was pretty proud of that, putting the show together, and up, in Japanese.

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[00:01:30] Then this, that, and the other thing happened, so I went back on the Blue Unit, while Jim Agona went to Japan in 89. Then the Gold Unit stopped, so I was out of a job again. So, I went to Japan, I mean to Australia, did a show there where I met the mother of my children. Then I rejoined Ringling in 95, six and seven, and then other stuff happened. Then I was done then. Then I went on to Big Apple, and have done other circuses since.

[00:02:00]

Nancy Davies: What led you ... Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt.

Dinny McGuire: No, sorry, that's all right. I was just going to say I also MC'ed Nicole [Phills 00:02:15] bar mitzvah.

Nancy Davies: Well, we're going to need stories from that, of course, as well.

Dinny McGuire: Well, yeah.

Nancy Davies: What led you to Ringling in the first place?

Dinny McGuire: Whatever leads a man to anything? A woman.

Nancy Davies: Ah.

[00:02:30]

Dinny McGuire: A woman I knew. She was a real renaissance man. Graphic artist, coloratura soprano, built soprano, you'd think [Glarin Begay 00:02:41] had been written by Leonard Bernstein for her. She was brilliant. Actress, dancer, choreographer, and she joined Ringling for the 1981 season. They heard her singing in winter quarters, and Irvin Feld said, "We want you to sing in the show next year." Not this coming year, because it was the second year of the tour.

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So, the ring master that year was Herald [Runk's 00:03:14] understudy, and he left at the end of the year, so she called me up and said, "They're having auditions there for a new ring master." Her intent being this way the very worst she would get as a singing partner would be me. If I didn't get the job, that's okay, but it would be somebody even better than me, as though or any good at all. So, I called, and called, and called, apparently they had decided on somebody already. But, I called, and called, and called, and finally Jeff [Loseph 00:03:51] got tired of getting my calls, I guess.

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So he said, "Okay, Jerry [Freeze 00:03:58] will be in town when we're in Oakland, can you come to Oakland?" I said yes. So, I got the audition I'm convinced, just to shut me up, and get me to stop calling. I auditioned in Oakland, California, and this is why I think they'd already picked somebody. Is Jerry said to me after the audition, "I'm afraid they've settled on somebody already." It might have been Harold Runk, I think they might have been thinking about bringing Harold back. I don't know. But, it was encouraging, because when you have an audition, and somebody says yeah, yeah, that was great, sorry, but ... I could tell, he was seriously disappointed after my audition, that I wasn't going to be able to get the job.

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So, he called me up a couple weeks later and said, "Send a tape." So, I sent a tape, and at this point Alice went to Irvin, and Jerry, and said, "Look, I need to be up front. I know this guy, I auditioned him. I mean I recommended that he audition, just so that's all up in the clear." So, anyhow, and she recommended me, and what do you know? I got the job. That was 81. So, there I was, my dad calls me. This is 1981. There are no cell phones. There's only hard line. My dad calls me, I'm down in Oceano, California, working at the Great American Melodrama and Vaudeville Theater, yay, best place in the world.

My dad calls me from the bay area, and says, "A guy called from Ringling." I said yeah? What'd he say? He said, "Well, he said call him later." I said who was it? He

[00:06:00] said, "Well here's the number." I said well who was it? He goes, "I don't know, some guy's name, started with an F." I'm thinking Jerry Freeze. No, no, no, no, it wasn't Jerry. It was Kenneth Feld, those pesky F names. So, I called, well it was clown college graduation night of 1981. So, he'll call you back, he'll call you back. I was like okay, okay, now I'm like ready to snap.

Okay, I'll just watch television until. So, I turned on the television. Disney Land, yeah I'll watch Disney Land. That'll be fine, I'll get my mind off it. The next thing you know, here's a stork with his bundles flying over ... It was Dumbo.

Nancy Davies: It sounds like it was meant to be.

[00:07:00]

Dinny McGuire: It was meant to be, and I was much assuaged by big elephants on parade. You remember that number?

Nancy Davies: It's been a long time, but I do.

Dinny McGuire: That's the one where one of the clowns, uh oh, uh oh here comes the boss. Dumps the whiskey bottle into the elephants water, and yeah. So, you get drunk, and have a drug induced hallucinations.

[00:07:30]

Nancy Davies: So, from when you-

Dinny McGuire: Oh, oh sorry.

Nancy Davies: Did you have more?

Dinny McGuire: No, no. Well yeah, but I'm relying on you to give this some structure.

Nancy Davies: So, here I go.

Dinny McGuire: Yeah, good luck.

Nancy Davies: From when you got the call-

Dinny McGuire: [crosstalk 00:07:44].

Nancy Davies: And were told yes.

Dinny McGuire: Yes.

Nancy Davies: You're in.

Dinny McGuire: I'm in.

Nancy Davies: How much time before you reported to duty, and began rehearsals?

[00:08:00]

Dinny McGuire: That would have been ... I don't know. Well, when is clown college graduation? September, October?

Nancy Davies: Well.

Dinny McGuire: It wasn't too long, it was a month or two tops, I think.

Nancy Davies: Okay.

Dinny McGuire: Had to be there the beginning of December for winter course, to put up a new show.

Nancy Davies: You arrived, and what did you think?

Dinny McGuire: I arrived-

Nancy Davies: Like oh my gosh? What did I get myself into? Or yay?

Dinny McGuire: No, no, no, no, no.

Nancy Davies: How exciting?

[00:08:30]

Dinny McGuire: It was great. It was great. The pungency of the winter course, because the elephants' barn was by and large attached practically to the arena. I say arena, but it was an old World War II training Air Force, Army, Air Force training camp is what was there, and this was the hanger.

Nancy Davies: This was in-

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Dinny McGuire: In Venice. No, it was great, it was great. Funny thing though, I had never seen this before. Now they're everywhere, you would have no idea what I'm talking about. You walk into a men's room, a public men's room now, and they have urinals for kids, which is to say this high, as opposed to this high. First place I ever saw one of those was at the Venice winter course. I thought wow, God bless these guys, they put in urinal for the dwarves and the midgets. Because there were still midgets in those days, not very many, Shandor, and Elizabeth, and [Mishu 00:09:41] were about it.

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So, I thought how cool is that? Then years later I start seeing them everywhere and I thought, are there really that many? Oh kids, I saw a kid and I went oh, you dummy. How wrong can you be? Sorry, so no, I was not, "What have I got myself into?" Although, I've got to say when I was taken to the train for my train room, it was a state room. I was a little taken aback. Six by seven, I'm the new kid. What am I going to say? Nothing. But, not only that, but it was occupied by a woman who

- [00:10:30] was now off the show, but by virtue of having married an elephant handler, who lived with her, because she was a performer, in the state room.
- I'm okay with it smelling like elephants at the building. I don't want my state room to smell like ... It takes you know, I went back ... One time, I went back to say hi to the guys. I loved the crew at Madison Square Garden. The ushers, it's a great crew there. So, I was in town, and went by to say hi, and I asked for ... Oh yeah, he's up on the arena floor, which is like the fifth floor. So, you take the elevator up to the fifth floor, this is three, four months after we had left. The doors opened on the elevator to the arena, and the elephants were still, their aura was still there. So yeah, so I'm thinking oh my God, what am I going to ... Oh, wait a minute. Now these rooms are six by seven.
- [00:11:00]
- [00:11:30] By virtue of the train being nine feet wide, and if you have a state room, the hallway is two feet wide. Then you get as opposed to a bunk car, or in those days, the [Rumet 00:11:46] cars. The two foot hallway goes right down the middle. Those rooms are six by three and a half, with the boat beds. Oh man, talk to a clown
- [00:12:00] about those places. Those are small. Anyhow, so I'm six by seven, but yay. The bed as you went in, it's seven foot to the other side, and then the six foot wall. The bed was on the six foot wall. I'm 6'2.
- [00:12:30] So, that gave me enough leverage to say uh, I can't sleep in that. He said, "What do you mean?" I said well, it's six feet, you know from finger tip to finger tip is your height. He said, "Yeah." I said watch, and I couldn't stretch, he said, "Oh." Then I laid down for him, he goes, "Oh yeah." So, I got a double state room that didn't smell of elephants.
- Nancy Davies: I like your style.
- Dinny McGuire: If the bed had been on the seven foot wall, what's a new guy going to say?
- [00:13:00]
- Nancy Davies: Exactly. So, as new guy, tell us about your first performance with an audience.
- Dinny McGuire: Well, that would have been oh, well okay then. That would have been the last final quadruple summersault thrown successfully until July 10th, of 1982.
- Nancy Davies: Oh wow.
- Dinny McGuire: Miguel threw it, caught it in front of the crowd, but-
- Nancy Davies: Miguel? Let's give-
- Dinny McGuire: Yes. Miguel Vasquez.
- Nancy Davies: Okay.

[00:13:30]

Dinny McGuire: To the hands of his brother Juan Vasquez. Threw it, caught it in front of not a paid audience. It was preview performance. So, these were all comped. So, it didn't count.

Nancy Davies: Wow.

Dinny McGuire: [00:14:00] You have to do it in front of a real audience, and that would have been ... That was, I have the poster. I'm so thrilled, it's on my wall. It's the poster of my first performance with Ringling. December 27th, 1981. Anyway, he didn't catch it again until July 10th, of that season, which would have been 82. What a thrill that was.

Nancy Davies: I was going to say, what an exciting moment.

Dinny McGuire: [00:14:30] You know how you ... You know, silly putty, and you throw down and it bounces up. You throw it down and it bounces up. If you took a ball of clay, exactly the same size as silly putty, and you threw it down, you come back up. Your eyes come back up, oh wait, what? Oh, it's still on the ground. That kind of learned reaction is watching the quadruple summersault for seven months, 13 times a week, fall. So, you ra da, da, da, one, two, three, four, and down ... Wait. My eyes are already on the net, and he's not there. He is in the hands of the catcher.

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Nancy Davies: So, in that moment-

Dinny McGuire: That moment was like-

Nancy Davies: What-

Dinny McGuire: I'm told I said things.

Nancy Davies: But, you don't know what they were?

Dinny McGuire: [00:15:30] Well, I know what I'm told they were. I don't believe that to be true. But, oh I shouldn't even say this. I shouldn't even-

Nancy Davies: Okay.

Dinny McGuire: But, you know what, I used to do a lot of stuff for the legend, for the stories. So, I've gone with it, well yeah, that's what they tell me. I didn't say that, and it was expletive deleted, he caught the expletive deleted. Two different expletives, by the way.

Nancy Davies: That's taken on a legend on its own?

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Dinny McGuire: That's taken on a life of its own.

Nancy Davies: Yeah.

Dinny McGuire: I didn't do that. I don't think. But, I was pretty excited.

Nancy Davies: Let's just talk about in general, you are one of really a very few people who've been a ring master of the greatest show on earth.

Dinny McGuire: Yeah, that's true.

Nancy Davies: What is that like? What is that legacy for you, and what is just that overall feeling that you've always had about being that?

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Dinny McGuire: It's pretty cool. It's pretty cool. I try not to be this way overtly, but I'm a little snooty about people that think putting on a red coat, and grabbing a top hat makes them a ring master. I'm not a big fan of that line of thought. It's hard enough when you make your living with your mouth. Yeah, take that out of context.

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To garner the respect for what it is you do, not for yourself, but for what it is ... It's like well, how come that guy gets 25 million dollars just to say lines in that movie? How come that singer ... Because everybody can sing in the shower, it's just this ... Anybody who can speak English can be a ring master in North America, and that sort of pervasive attitude, it's one thing that people in general think that. But, there are producers who think that.

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It's made it hard being out on the market after Ringling, that we got this guy, he's cheaper, and you know they speak English, and this, that, and the other thing. Anybody that can do a 1950's rock and roll disk jockey voice thinks they're a ring master, and they're not, frankly. They're not. It's not the same as Broadway.

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Although, there have been a couple of Broadway style guys that have sold themselves by playing to the auditionees, or auditioners table.

Hey, a pizzazz, even though the arena is where you have to play to. If you're going to audition a ring master, you need to sit 20 rows up to really get the ... Because they've hired some guys that I thought weren't ring masters. They were Broadway performers.

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Nancy Davies: That's a really interesting point, so what are some of the things that you found when you were hired, and as you spent time, that what does it take to be a Ringling Brothers ring master? Because you are playing to an arena, but you also have to have that intimacy I think, to a certain extent.

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Dinny McGuire: Yeah, you have to have a certain amount of vocal prowess that can fill the room, even with a mic. You don't want to yell, but you have to be able to project. The whole time I was with them, even when the technology came, I declined to use in ear monitors, because I want to monitor the way I sound. I don't want to hear what the sound man thinks I should hear. I want to hear myself in the room, so to speak.

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- [00:20:30] I don't want to hear the mix, because the mix does not reflect what's out there, and maybe I don't trust sound men enough. Believe me, at Ringling, there was enough of that. Although, guys like Lloyd Kincaid, he was just brilliant. But, my first year was the first year Ringling carried their own sound system.
- Nancy Davies: Really?
- Dinny McGuire: As opposed to just using the PA from the arenas.
- Nancy Davies: Oh.
- Dinny McGuire: So, they hired a sound guy. Well, they didn't know anything about hiring a sound guy, so they just hired a circus fan to come and ... Had no idea what he was doing, which is one thing, and I tried to use positive influence, positive reinforcement. Today, whatever you did today, it was perfect, it was perfect. Then the next show it was awful again. But, it went beyond, it went beyond not knowing what he's doing. It was worse than that, and I could never figure it out.
- [00:21:00]
- [00:21:30] Then, eight months into the season, we were in San Diego. And the whistle blows, and da na na, ta, ta, ta, ta, ta. Bing, bang, [inaudible 00:21:35], and opening, and it's opening, and segue directly into teeter boards, da ta, ta, ta, ta, ta, all the way through the teeter board act. We're that far into the show, we come to the blow off tricks for the teeter boards, and silence. "And now ladies and gentlemen, in ring three this, in ring one this, and in ring two, that."
- [00:22:00] So, now it's just me, the bands not playing, and oh my Lord, there was this buzz going on. Now, we already know that with this equipment, mercury vapor lights, when they're being turned on, interfere, and go [inaudible 00:22:15], and do stuff.
- [00:22:30] But, this was something else. I'm doing the announcement, and Peggy Williams, the assistant performance director is b-lining for the sound board. Sound man's over there, and she's talking to him. I'm just finishing up the ring two, we never call it ring in the center ring. The ring two announcement, and I recognized it.
- [00:23:00] It was the lights, but it wasn't the lights interacting with our system, the lights were generating the sound, and I recognized it from my days at San Francisco state in the music department. In the classrooms, those lights made that sound. So, now they're doing the trick, I'm off for a while. Like two or three minutes, so I walk over the soundboard, and I said, "It's the lights," and Peggy said, "No they're not," I said, "No, no. They're making," and she stopped listening. It was like dog ears, she went, "Huh, oh, oh yeah." So, question asked, problem not solved, because there is no solution, that's live with it.
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- [00:24:00] Then I turn to walk away, and at this moment, eight months into the season, I found the zen of this sound man, and I how would deal with it, when Peggy said to him, and there's this obnoxious buzz going on. She turns to him and says, "Larry, are you sure you can't hear that?" He had massive hearing loss, he had retired, he was like in his early fifties, late forties, had retired from his job at a lumber mill on disability, because of severe hearing loss. And this is the guy they hired to be the

sound man, it was like I didn't have to worry about the sound for the rest of the year, because it didn't matter.

Nancy Davies: Did he last the season, or the tour?

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Dinny McGuire: Oh, he lasted well into the next season. In fact, I went to the Blue show, I mean to the Red show the next season, and Jim took over the second year of that tour. Something had gone terribly wrong, like as Mike was off, or this, that, or the other thing.

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Jim is not quite as easy going as I am, and when he was done with his first announcement, he stormed over to the sound table, and Larry's got his earphones on. He's got his mic down and off, and he says, "Larry! Larry! Larry! What are you," and Larry was there listening to a tape of Allison I Sing, what we were doing on the Red show that year. Someone had sent him a tape, this is the Red show this year, and he was listening to another show, instead of-

Nancy Davies: Paying attention to his show.

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Dinny McGuire: Paying attention. Then, so it was like ... Then the sound man on the Red show was without being deaf, not much better. So, we got to the end of the season, and Irvin was tired of hearing about it, I'm sure. He said, "Just hire whoever Denny rec'd," because I had somebody I recommended. "Just hire that person. Two things, first of all, we'll get a good sound person, and if we don't he can't complain, because it's his recommendation."

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It was a woman I had worked with at the Great American Melodrama and Vaudeville Theater, who was my stage manager there, and she knew this stuff. She'd run sound in theaters, and she knew what she was doing. The previous year, I told her about a problem, she said, "That's the 60 cycle hum. You've got to do this and that." So, I went and said, it's 60 cycle, do this and that. She wasn't even there, and she diagnosed a problem, and fixed it.

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So, she became the sound man, and of course everybody was up in arms. Even then, 80's, "Oh, coming in here taking a man's job. She must be you know what, taking a man's job." Even Bob McDougall was not ... But, Irvin told him, "Hire the girl." Have you ever seen that commercial-

Nancy Davies: Which one?

Dinny McGuire:

It's like a Ziegfeld kind of guy auditioning a magician, and he's trying to levitate the girl, and she won't come up. And, it's for some candy bar, "Oh, fluffy, not stuffy." So, she has a bite of that, and up she goes, up she goes, and it comes to the ... The tagline is the Irvin Feld slash Flo Ziegfeld guy goes, "Hire the girl." So, I can't say hire the girl without thinking of that. Anyway, you get to edit this, right? Anyhow, so then, somewhere along the line, I think Knoxville, whatever it was on load in. Sound

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quits, "I've had it, you guys," walks off.

Nancy Davies: Wow.

Dinny McGuire: Walks off. Not sound, lights.

Nancy Davies: Oh.

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Dinny McGuire: Lights. Nobody knows the cues. Nobody knows the cues. What are we going to do? What are we going to do? What are we going to do? Turn the lights on? Turn the lights off? No, eh, what are we going to do? Sarah Jane says-

Nancy Davies: And Sarah Jean is?

Dinny McGuire: The sound person-

Nancy Davies: Oh, sorry, yes.

Dinny McGuire: The sound person that I recommended, said, "Well, there's a cue sheet." Yeah, but that's Greek to everybody on the show. This is before smart lights, what the hell is a cue sheet? Well, can you read that? "Well, yeah." Okay. Can you do that? But, then who will do sound? Sarah Jean says, "It'll be fine." So, Sarah Jean that night ran sound and lights.

[00:28:30]

Nancy Davies: Oh my gosh.

Dinny McGuire: At the same time, well she got a nice little raise for that, I hope. The next year, the CBS special ring master was Ben Vereen. Sarah Jean is a huge Ben Vereen fan. She said, "You better introduce me to Ben Vereen, or I'll rip your face off, and feed it to your neck." And she can! Said oh, okay. Well, I don't have a lot of contact with the CBS ring master, because they're coming in, and basically doing my job. So, I'm not there while they're ... But, you know it's Denny, hi, hi Ben, and let me show you in. I said if you've got a minute, I just want you to meet miss Sarah Jean Allison, our sound, she runs sound and lights.

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He said, "Oh, nice to meet you." He stops as he turns after nice to meet, and he said, "I'm sorry what? You run lights, and sound?" "Yeah." And he looks around the arena as if to take in the scope of the show we're talking about, and says, "For this?" She said, "Yeah." He looked, his man was there, whoever takes care of stuff, said, "Get her information." They hired her for his next tour.

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Nancy Davies: Oh wow.

Dinny McGuire: Which got canceled, because he did that TV show. But, yeah, she was that good. That good.

Nancy Davies: How long was she with the show?

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Dinny McGuire: She was their first female performance director. Became that, and yeah, she was ... In fact, Bob McDougall, who was the general manager, who didn't want to hire a girl, came to me and said, "After the debacle with the lighting director," he said, "You got anymore like that?" I go yeah. It was her that got them to start looking at theater people, and bringing in theater expertise.

[00:31:00]

Nancy Davies: Oh, interesting.

Dinny McGuire: Before that, it was well, this guy's been shoveling elephant poop long enough, let's give him a technical job. Honest to God, that seems to be the way it was. Then of course they started by the time 89, 88, 89 got there, and smart lights were coming in. They had to start yeah.

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Nancy Davies: All right, so you would be someone who worked with both Irvin, and Kenneth-

Dinny McGuire: And Kenneth-

Nancy Davies: Feld.

Dinny McGuire: Yes.

Nancy Davies: Let's talk about that. Let's talk about what it was like to work for both of them, but we'll talk about it separately. Let's start with Irvin.

Dinny McGuire: Well, Irvin was ... I had a great childhood. I had a great family. It was the happiest time of my life when I was a kid, I had a great, great family. Great mom, great dad, so it's not like I needed a father figure. But, Irvin was as close to a second father figure as I could imagine. I mean, he was firm, when he wanted something, he made sure I knew that he wanted that. But, he guided me in the direction he wanted to go. He's the one that said, after my first dress rehearsal said, "You're plenty tall. Never wear the hat."

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Nancy Davies: Really?

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Dinny McGuire: Which was a huge plus for me, because the prettily quaffed ring master-

Nancy Davies: So, you just carried your hat?

Dinny McGuire: I only carried my hat, because I put it on once, and two seconds later, I had hat head. Agona will tell you the same thing, although he wore his ... He had that fabulous wavy hair that he could have grown an Afro with. Italian hair he had. If you wore the hat too long, that would happen. What I'm saying is, his hair had character of its own. Mine, it's just this ... If I get it to where I want it, and lacquer it there, it looks fabulous, or it used to. But, don't put a hat on it, and sweat at all,

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then it looks crummy.

Nancy Davies: That's a secret I never knew.

Dinny McGuire: Oh, yeah. Well-

Nancy Davies: I've seen pictures, I've seen you perform-

Dinny McGuire: That's another story.

Nancy Davies: And I've seen you carry it, but I never realized you never wore it.

[00:33:30]

Dinny McGuire: That's why I never wore it. I never wore it. Irvin was great. God, I got Irvin stories.

Nancy Davies: Oh, give us one.

Dinny McGuire: You know the history of Irvin Feld in show business, I mean snake oil salesman, he would guess weight at the fairs. That kind of stuff, which figures into this story.

[00:34:00] We're in a production, "Denny, Mr. Feld wants you at production meeting tonight." Oh my Lord, really? Okay. So, I go up, and I go into the production meeting in Irvin's office, and his desk is in one corner. It's in like a square office. Everybody else is pressed as far into the opposite corner as they can get, because, "Please don't call on me, please don't call on me, I didn't do my homework," kind of thing, you know, sort of.

[00:34:30] So, I walk in, what do I know? I'm the new kid, I've never been to a production meeting before. I sit down at his left hand, because biblically, and appropriately so, Kenneth was sitting at his right hand. So, this kind of gets into me and Kenneth's relationship. I'm new, I don't care, he's Kenneth, so he doesn't care. We shot it back and forth, and just had a good time. Doing business, but you know if something funny, if there was a funny thing to be said, because it led there, we did. So, we had a great time in production meetings, Kenneth and I, and Irvin tolerated us.

[00:35:00] So, Kenneth says at one point, they're talking about a particular act that I won't get into, because why be cruel? But, the guy in charge of the act, the head act guy's wife, was wearing 80's costume with the French cut trunks thing, and kind of uh, she's a little [basid 00:35:44], she's got two kids, she's in her forties. Mm, okay? So, Kenneth says, "Has anyone talked to Mrs. Hm about her weight yet?" Jim holds, kind of yes, kind of raises his hand and says yes. Kind of takes his clipboard, puts it in front of his face, because he's kind of chuckling.

[00:36:00] Kenneth says, "What?" He said, "Well, I did, I talked to her about it yesterday, and she said she's very happy with her new diet, and so pleased that she's already down to 110 pounds." Irvin interrupts, and says, "What?" And he's got a cigar, it's almost like he's doing a George Burns. He goes, "What? 110? 110? Gentlemen I used to guess weights for a living, and she's 140 if she's a pound." Laugh, laugh, laugh, laugh, laugh, laugh. Beat, beat, "And I ain't even felt her." It was like

- [00:37:00] God I love this man, because he waited just the right amount of time before. He probably said, "I haven't even felt her," but I've been telling that story for so long, it's become, "I ain't even felt her."
- Nancy Davies: Yeah.
- Dinny McGuire: "And I haven't even felt her," it was like if you know his history, this is the perfect thing to say. Yeah, he's great. Or, one time, this would have been for Lordy, Lordy, Lordy, the 80 45 seasons, season. They were doing a Broadway elephant number, and the Don Foot ... Or, I think it was Don, yeah. I think it was still Don by then, had designed these wings for the ... You've probably seem them, for the showgirls, like half of them, these costumes. The wings were designed to be one foot here, and one foot here, made of imported ostrich something or other, dyed yellow and black.
- [00:38:00]
- [00:38:30] The problem is they got them from France. They were made, and assembled. They wasted, I mean they spared no expense in those days. I mean the Pink Panther show, in the final long mount, all of the showgirls in the pink costumes on the elephants, with these big fur collars, those were pink dyed mink.
- Nancy Davies: Really?
- Dinny McGuire: Oh yeah.
- Nancy Davies: Wow.
- Dinny McGuire: They spent money on costumes in those days. So anyway, so these came from France. The problem is if you're writing one foot, six inches in America, you write one, apostrophe, six, quotation mark, right?
- [00:39:00]
- Nancy Davies: Right.
- Dinny McGuire: So, these were supposed to be one foot a piece, so it was one, apostrophe. They don't have feet in France at this point, they're metric, and one apostrophe means one meter!
- [00:39:30]
- Nancy Davies: Uh oh.
- Dinny McGuire: So, now these wings arrive, and they're seven foot wingspans. These girls are like, they had to go into training. They had to come in early, and in between, and work with them, just so they could do the number with them. So-