

CWM Audio 70-4
Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus Homecoming
(Employee Reunion)
Group Interview, July 21, 2017
Group 7

Interview with Fr. George "Jerry" Hogan, Dr. David Tetrault, Fr. Frank Cancro,
and Fr. Dick (Richard) Notter
Interview conducted by LaVahn Hoh

- LaVahn Hoh: Alright, I'm LaVahn Hoh. The date is the 21st of July and we are here with four gentleman to talk about their experiences with Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus. We'll start to my left, and you are?
- Jerry Hogan: Father Jerry Hogan. For 24 years, I was appointed by the Bishops of the United States of America and the People on the Move, considered, I guess, the national circus chaplain.
[00:00:30]
- Dick Notter: I'm Father Dick Notter from Toledo, Ohio, and I've been helping with the ministry for about 20 years.
- Frank Cancro: Father Frank Cancrow, a priest of the diocese of Charlotte, North Carolina. I'm the youngest and the prettiest, and I've been working with the ministry since end of 2009.
- LaVahn Hoh: Okay, the other pretty face?
- [00:01:00]
David Tetrault: I'm David Tetrault. I'm an Episcopal priest, and I joined, ran away with the circus 1994 when Father Hogan did. I worked at it for 12 years, and my money ran out and his didn't.
- LaVahn Hoh: Alright, so I'll start with what dates did you begin and if you're still going at it, and if you stopped, what dates did you stop? You're still going.
- Jerry Hogan: Yes, started 1993. Jack Tono was the previous chaplain. He got sick, and he gave my name to the bishops. They came and asked whether I could do this and I said, "Well, what do you do?" I was a college chaplain 11 years in US Boston and Emmanuel College. So I talked to Jack and then he got sick as I said, and I took over for him and started to work in the ministry. We got funding from a small grant from the Catholic extension. We report to the USCCB. So that's when I began. Interesting at the beginning, because I came on board in March in '93. It had just been announced that day that they were moving the clown college here to [inaudible 00:02:10] the following year. And the last week in April, I was in Providence and we got the call that [inaudible 00:02:17] was put down by an elephant up in Florida where they retired the elephants at the time before they had the center. It was like
- [00:02:00]

- [00:02:30] baptism of the fire. I had to go back to the record in Boston to twelve phone calls saying, "We need you."
- I went down the next day and did a prayer service and they flew me Nashville, North Carolina, and we did a service on the show and then they flew me down to [inaudible 00:02:43] so I had the chance to actually be in Tim Holt's and Irvin Feld's office when they were preparing and doing ecumenical service in the Methodist church on that Monday. That was the first two weeks. Boom. Hit the road running.
- [00:03:00]
- Dick Notter: Okay. Well I didn't come prepared. I don't remember exactly what year but it was around '95, '96. I had done a lot of work with farm workers over the years, and I was down in Florida. I was at [inaudible 00:03:27] in Ruskin, which includes the neighboring town of Gibsonton, which you may well know is where a lot of carnival and circus people live. After the Spanish mass on Saturday night, this retired performer came up and said, "My daughter left for the show this past fall. They're going to be in Tampa next week and they want to baptize a baby. Could you go do it?" I was fluent in Spanish and they were Latinos, and the pastor knew the family so I went up and did it. The sister at the bishop's conference had coordinated all these special ministries, me being from the farm worker ministry, and she'd heard about this baptism so she started calling me up. She said the Little Sisters of Jesus are working the circus, and they'll be in Ohio next week. Will you go have mass for them?" One thing led to another, and like I said, that's about 20 something years ago, and I've been at it ever since, and then I retired from my parish in 2008. So now I'm on the road almost all the time.
- [00:04:00]
- [00:04:30]
- LaVahn Hoh: Okay.
- Frank Cancro: So in October of 2009, Sister Dorothy came to my parish outside of Charlotte to do a fundraising plea for weekend masses, and between two of the masses on Sunday, she was in my office relaxing. And in my office, there is a picture of me when I was a clown. I had not told Dorothy much of anything about me. Sitting there, she pointed at the picture and she said, "Who is that?" So I had to tell her my story, and that was the end. After that, I was told by her that I would be coming to a meeting in January and she would see to it, and that I should be doing this week. So sure enough, about three weeks later, I got a letter from the bishops conference telling me to go to the meeting in January down in Sarasota. That's kind of how I got stuck into it. The first real show I worked with in 2010 was the Gold Unit - no, it was the blue in Tampa - and then the Gold unit after that. And then pretty much consistently got into those shows and some of the other traveling shows. I'm still doing it.
- [00:05:00]
- [00:05:30]
- My hope, I retire in two years, is to kind of emulate Dick and full time go on the road and keep working the shows.
- [00:06:00]
- David Tetrault: My association with Ringling came in 93 94...I don't remember. When did we start talking about this? We were some place.

Jerry Hogan: [inaudible 00:06:11] the ones that started us. They brought us down to a meeting in [inaudible 00:06:15] I'm trying to - how do -

David Tetrault: I don't remember.

Jerry Hogan: [00:06:30] At the meeting it was you, me, Sister [inaudible 00:06:23] Sister Pesoa, and [inaudible 00:06:26]. [inaudible 00:06:27] and Sister Suzanne Hall, and we had a meeting at the hotel we were just at, and that's how it began. And we started talking. Yeah.

David Tetrault: [00:07:00] We needed to get official endorsements. You had yours on the way. I had [crosstalk 00:06:52]. I went for presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church, and that was not a big problem. I was put under the military [inaudible 00:07:00] which I think is where you were.

Jerry Hogan: No, no. I wish I was, because there's fair taxes.

David Tetrault: [00:07:30] Yeah. I had money. I figure I could get home and have a way of getting it. Then you and I talked about what it would be like if we put it together somehow so that we were kind of a united religious package for the shows. Then we went to Rome. That's when I had my letter from the archbishop of Canterbury.

Jerry Hogan: And was it after Rome that was the train wreck or before?

David Tetrault: After.

Jerry Hogan: Okay. It was after

David Tetrault: That's when we really got pushed into it.

Jerry Hogan: That's right. So we went to Rome for this meeting and almost got robbed in the thing. Remember, we went to St. Peter's. [crosstalk 00:07:51]

David Tetrault: [00:08:00] Via Aurelia bus. I haven't been back on the Via Aurelia bus since then.

Jerry Hogan: I actually did get pick pocketed by the kid beside me. So yeah, we went to Rome, we had that meeting, and that's when I got the circus jacket. I had a ring circus jacket made up. Ironically it was made by the people at Lawrence Mass. Six years later, I'm in Lawrence Mass, so I met the people who actually made the jacket.

David Tetrault: And I got one.

Jerry Hogan: Yeah. You had the jacket, and we gave one to the pope, remember? And we have that beautiful shot. That was great. Remember the sister we used to call the real nun?

David Tetrault: The real nun?

Jerry Hogan: The real nun who flew, never walked.

David Tetrault: She moved like she was on a machine.

[00:08:30]

Jerry Hogan: Oh we had more fun. We were at this meeting, and we're all speaking. We got the things like the United Nations for each other. The Fossets were there from England, and they were all there; we met them. It was kind of a good time to be there, but we didn't know what the heck we were doing. I mean, we still don't go to those crazy meetings in Rome. Yeah, that's how it started. And then, from there, January, we're down. We had our, really, second meeting. I don't know if we ever got the same [inaudible 00:08:59] from mass. I don't know if that happened yet. And then the train wreck hit.

[00:09:00]

David Tetrault: Lakeland.

Jerry Hogan: Right, Lakeland, Florida. I got a call. It happened in the morning. They had me on a plane. I was there by 6:30. They called and Suzanne [inaudible 00:09:14] they called Dave down and we were both together for a whole week with the show. We had to move the show from Orlando. I went to Orlando. We had to put the show together. [00:09:30] Everyone's grieving because we lost Ted and we lost [inaudible 00:09:35] that's right. You were involved in that too. So we had to put that all together. That was tough. That was a tough time.

David Tetrault: And the blue show was in Daytona.

Jerry Hogan: That's right.

David Tetrault: And they pulled both shows together and fed all of us.

Jerry Hogan: Yes. First they did the show, and I'll never forget this, because Eric Michael Gillett was on the red show and Jim O'Connell was the ring master, and they did this comedy act with the clowns that he did. All of a sudden, I noticed, he wasn't doing the thing. He had his voice but he was off by the band. He had pulled his shoulder, and he was standing on the side and they were doing the skit. So I went down to Frank [inaudible 00:10:19] I said, "What's going on?" And he said, "He's got to go to the hospital. Would you go with him?" I said, "Sure." So me and someone else took him to the hospital. So they're having this big meal. They had this big picture with all of us, with all the clowns. [00:10:30]

David Tetrault: Yeah, yeah.

Jerry Hogan: All the clowns and the two of us, frick or frack. I get to the hospital. And Jim is in pain. He says, "Of all times. Eric Michael's there, and I can't even perform. I wanted him to see me work." It was unbelievable. That was it. That's right. We had that, yeah.

David Tetrault: [00:11:00] Yeah, the dinner was really impressive. That was the first time that it had ever happened up that they had put both units together and fed all of us. How about the support that came out of that? And remember how all of a sudden they got the circus moving? Remember the girl - what was her name, Bernice?"

Jerry Hogan: Bernice, Bernice Collins.

David Tetrault: Bernice had worked with ICE, so she packed everybody on a bus or a series of them, and they got the show moving.

Jerry Hogan: [00:11:30] They called her the queen of something, because they had to put, for a whole year, put them up in hotels. And she had to organize them. Then she went on to the Big Apple Circus. She was supposed to come here with Vanessa Thomas with the Big Apple; they were supposed to be here. I saw Vanessa in Washington. The key thing about that, is why that all worked, because of Allen Bloom. Allen Bloom.

David Tetrault: And Susana.

Jerry Hogan: And Susana Smith.

David Tetrault: Yeah.

Jerry Hogan: [00:12:00] And they really organized it. When I got to Orlando that morning, I was called into a room. It was me, Allen, and Kenneth, the three of us. We talked about what to do, and stuff like that. Then I saw immediately the development that Allen was like Kenneth's older brother. Stuff like that. And then Allen came out - I'll never forget this - he came out with a cigar. He was the one that created the three shows Saturday. He walks around and says, "There's not enough food. Get Susana. We gotta have food all the time. It's got to be like a two day Jewish wake. We need food." Honest to God. It was unbelievable.

[00:12:30]

David Tetrault: And it showed up.

Jerry Hogan: Oh my God. We gotta feed everyone. And that's what it ended up being in Daytona. He was a great guy.

David Tetrault: And there was food on the site all the time.

Jerry Hogan: Unbelievable. He was a great guy.

David Tetrault: Then the guy that was the lawyer -

Jerry Hogan: Oh, Chuck Smith.

David Tetrault: How much can we talk about him?

Jerry Hogan: [00:13:00] Chuck Smith. He went to Milton High School. I used to take him out to see how he was doing. I would check on his marks [inaudible 00:13:01] Oh yeah.

David Tetrault: The smooth guy who was sitting there making sure everybody signed a release form, remember that one?

Jerry Hogan: Oh yeah.

David Tetrault: Yeah. But anyway, that's how we began.

Jerry Hogan: That's the first month.

David Tetrault: Literally. That's the first month.

LaVahn Hoh: All right. So let me ask you. Some people didn't want to answer this question, and you certainly don't have to, but what are your feelings about the closing of Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey?
[00:13:30]

David Tetrault: I guess I'm conflicted about it. On the one hand, I understand from a business perspective what they must have gone through and I certainly don't know the inner workings of the company. I understand making business choices. Of course, the other side is, my work puts me, immerses me in the lives of the people that are on that show. And from that perspective, boy there was a lot of grieving, a lot of emotion, a lot of need to just be present and support and here we are months from it and there's still people out there who have no direction yet and are still plowing through a lot of their own feelings. So, that side is also, for me, an important side of it, is the care of people, a piece of it. I think when the shows close - I saw that certainly on the Red Unit - the Red Unit was, I think, hurting.
[00:14:00]

I'm not sure about the Blue Unit. Those people had maybe a lot more time in the business on the Blue than maybe on the Red, but the Red ended in a frayed kind of way. The Blue seemed to be maybe a little better. But that frayed ending is still kind of out there with folks that I still have contact with. They're still looking around. I got a message today from a guy that could be interpreted that he's so depressed that he's thinking about suicide. I don't know if that's the case, but that's what it sounds like. So I've got to follow up with that. And that's all a result of the change in his life. So I'm conflicted from both of those perspectives.
[00:14:30]

[00:15:00]

[00:15:30]

Frank Cancro: It certainly was a sad time. We were all at the closings. My sense is that I don't really know the history of everybody on the two shows, but my sense was that the people on the Red show had been together longer and it was more emotional for them than it was for the people in the Blue. It was very powerful at the last show [inaudible 00:15:57] finished his cat act. It was very powerful. I don't know if you were there, but he thanked every cat by name as they left the ring and then he broke down. He was in there, there weren't too many dry eyes. As he said, I can understand from a business perspective, that was probably the decision they had to make. I think of it in terms of the overall Feld corporation. It's my understanding that the cirque was about fifteen percent of the business, so they had a lot of other things in action to balance with that. It certainly was.
[00:16:00]

[00:16:30]

- [00:17:00] I feel good that many people who could have been very critical have not been critical on the Internet, which I think is encouraging. Some people could have said some nasty things that they didn't say.
- Dick Notter:
[00:17:30] I retired early. I was kind of wore out. I worked at a wonderful church in the middle of colonial Williamsburg but I just kind of gave out after a while. I took my piano skills and musical skills and I went to Busch Gardens down the road and played there for six seasons, and that's mostly what I do now. I'm a musician. I'm now working in the industry, and I'm listening to the kinds of things that are going on, and having been in religion all my life, I'm noticing that there's something about the contact between the work that we do and the audience to which it is addressed. And the disconnect is getting bigger and bigger, and that's of concern. I think what happened with Ringling - and I've heard this from several people in it - is that there's something that's happening in the audience now that wasn't there before. I was talking to the general manager of the red show. I said, "What do you think is going on?" He reached into his pocket and pulled this out. He says, "It's all there. We can put out the best talent in the world and the parent's gonna enjoy it; the kid's gonna say, "Yeah, that was interesting.""
- [00:18:00]
- [00:18:30]
- [00:19:00] I sat one night - I took my kids to see David Copperfield Richmond, Virginia in the big coliseum - fantastic show. The guy in front of me takes his kids. He's watching basketball the whole time David Copperfield is on, and his kids are watching David Copperfield. I'm wondering what's the disconnect there. Is this part of his Honey-Do list where he's got to take the boys out to see a magic show. He obviously doesn't want to be there, but at the same time, what's the impression that the kid takes when they're watching their dad on the phone? I don't know. But I keep watching audience change, audience change, and as somebody who works in always trying to enchant the audience, it's getting to be harder work than it used to be.
- [00:19:30]
- David Tetrault:
[00:20:00] I think too, certainly before they announced their farewell tour, which packed the houses, you walk out onto the arena floor at any performance in any venue and it was clear they weren't getting crowds. But neither is baseball. They keep trying to gerrymander it, to fix it so that something emerges out of it that people will pay money. NASCAR is going through this too. I've got a neighbor who used to be a NASCAR driver and he says the same thing. They're just watching it all just kind of tear away. I don't know. We were at the meeting at the Smithsonian, the 50th anniversary. We had some good conversations about this whole thing. Of course, there was a lamenting, and the people out of work and the form and the culture and everything else that we brought our children to for years. At the same time, there's a place where there's some fresh air on the other side of that. It isn't every industry, every entertainment form, that can at least bracket that huge piece out and say, "There's something else here if we can just find it." You've specialized in theater. You've watched it go, and change, and shift.
- [00:20:30]
- [00:21:00]
- LaVahn Hoh: Yeah. Jerry?

Jerry Hogan: Yeah, I've got a lot of mixed feelings and different concepts. Looking back on the different eras of the show and how it changes and unfolds and the people behind it and their loyalty and the people work very hard. And some of them are here today, and it's good to see them. Everyone worked for Ringling except I think two people got fired. Not too many people resigned and Tim [inaudible 00:21:33] died on the show, so since he died, you also see the quality of the shows went down. I think it's not the same show the last ten years. It's been pretty bad, and I'm talking to people and what they're getting paid. The pay scales are one thing, not on the performing side, but on the concessions side - when I started, and when David started, the people selling concessions were getting 25%. So some of them were making 90 to 110,000 per year. So they were doing very well and everything was good. Now, the last year, they were making 9%.

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[00:22:00]

LaVahn Hoh: Nine?

Jerry Hogan: Nine percent.

LaVahn Hoh: Ouch.

Jerry Hogan: And the prices went up.

LaVahn Hoh: Yeah.

Jerry Hogan: So these people - you know that's why they're losing people on the Blue show - concession people because no one was coming, so they weren't making any money. But then you have the performers. They dumb it down, they bring in - the last show, they brought in these kids to skate, and they do acrobatics. What are they getting, ten cents on the dollar? When they did the Mongolian tour, Tatiana, her husband came over. They were making \$125 a week. They were being paid by the company - not by the Ringling people, but by the act for \$20,000 a month. So all that. So you brought all these people. So you were bringing all these people in, and the inequality, and then they get the idea of transforming [inaudible 00:23:08] the girls really get involved, and they were listened to, but they didn't - after Tim died- they didn't look too much for good acts. They created this book show, and they were having, my gosh - it was a funny story about the last show.

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[00:23:30] Anyway, I was on Allington for a few days when we were putting it together. [inaudible 00:23:31] to the point that I never watched the shows; I always stayed in the back. I couldn't stand them. So they put this [inaudible 00:23:38] show together -

LaVahn Hoh: Is that the one with the skates?

Jerry Hogan: Yeah. [crosstalk 00:23:44]

David Tetrault: We were testing the concessions.

Jerry Hogan: We were testing the concessions.

David Tetrault: They had these new light things that were supposed to go - so they had us sit over on the side and hang these things around. By the end of the first act both of us had just put them down.

[00:24:00]

Jerry Hogan: They were going to sell them for like \$25 a thing. We looked at each other and said, "What the heck's going on?" These are the new concepts that they're bringing in to the show. So anyway, the show goes on - I think I was in California with it; I saw it there. So then it was the closing, so my friend John Kennedy came, fondly known as [inaudible 00:24:17]. He said, "I'm going down to Charleston. I've got to see the Blue show. I haven't seen it. I want to see Davis, the Italian clown, do the upside down." I said, "What are they talking about? There's no upside down in that show." [00:24:30] "Oh yeah, they did, the upside down." He calls me and said, "I saw the upside down." I said, "Oh my God. I never saw the whole show. It was so bad, I was backstage. I never even saw the whole show." That's to the point that I got. [inaudible 00:24:48] I wasn't surprised.

[00:25:00]

Shocked that they closed both units, and then like everyone else, on January 14th, there was Kitty by the door. How do you deal with this? The grief, the frustration, the anger, all that stuff? And you're right. There wasn't as much anger as we thought we'd have. So we come down to Providence, and all three of us are together. It was very difficult. Providence was a lot hotter than Uniondale. Tom Dylan, who is just a fabulous guy - he retired a year before - he was on our board for our retired project. [inaudible 00:25:25]

LaVahn Hoh: Do you know him?

David Tetrault: Yes.

[00:25:30]

Jerry Hogan: Yeah, Tom is a fabulous guy. So he wanted to take the run, him and the other train master, who was on the Blue show. The Blue show came on to be with him. So, the final show, goodbyes, it was very difficult. By Monday, we had to get everyone off the train, and had to get them into the airports, and Rob Lang, the general manager, is a phenomenal guy, he's number 2 on my list. Mike [inaudible 00:25:55] is the best general manager I worked with, but I tell you, Rob Lang, you guys know very well. He'll do all that, and then Tuesday morning we removed the train. So I went down and had lunch with Tom Dylan and I was going to watch the train as it left. I figured, hey they were [inaudible 00:26:10] all the time at the beginning of the season. So I stand on the side of the hill with some friends of mine and the train went goodbye, and we called it the ghost train. [inaudible 00:26:19] as it went by. I went to car 57 as it went by because we own it now. Car 57.

[00:26:30]

So I was doing all that. I think finally, I went back, on a Wednesday, I'm in my room, and I looked at the YouTube of the final show with them, and that's when I lost it. I couldn't stop crying for an hour. Everything came out. I'd been holding everything in. I remember saying, "What the heck?" I just couldn't cope by myself. It was

[00:27:00] tough. And then, two weeks later, we had to crank it up again and do it all over again. These guys, they lost the train on Saturday, Sunday, Saturday?

David Tetrault: Oh, one of the days. Sunday I guess it was, because I left the next day.

Jerry Hogan: And then as I said, Uniondale was so different. So many people came. It was like this huge reunion. We saw people we hadn't seen in years. All these people came just to be there for the final show, and the great thing about that, which was kind of emotional I think for the three of us, they invited us on the floor. We were on the floor with them.

[00:27:30]

David Tetrault: And they announced it; they told everybody who we were.

Jerry Hogan: United States [inaudible 00:27:31] division, twice. [crosstalk 00:27:32]

David Tetrault: He left out the pie part but he mentioned us twice.

Jerry Hogan: And we're looking at all these people, standing, 19000, 20000 people, and yet, I'll never forget, like it was frozen in time, was it? The anonymity - it was really -

David Tetrault: Yeah.

LaVahn Hoh: Oh my.

Jerry Hogan: And then we all went back to the bar at the Marion, where we were all staying. My God, I was up til midnight.

[00:28:00]

David Tetrault: I stayed for a load out. I stayed at the arena while they were loading out.

Jerry Hogan: Oh my God.

David Tetrault: Because I just felt like I ought to be there. It was the quietest loadout that I have ever heard. I mean, they rallied toward the end, and had pictures and all, but at first, it was - I don't want to mislabel it - but it almost felt like they weren't quite sure they really wanted to do this. You know? Because, a normal loadout is to get it done so that you can get a day off or two, but this one, it just was the quietest time I ever - I watched it. I watched the unit in Hampton when I was there. Everything was different from when it - I came home and I said I felt like I was taking one of our old dogs to the vet in the waiting room waiting to put the old thing away. It was so depressing. People who you've known for years, many of whom don't have a lot of social skill, put politely - what are you going to do when you leave here? What are you going to do? Did you save any money? "Oh yeah, I saved some money." I don't know where I'm going to live. These are guys who have given their lives to that show.

[00:28:30]

[00:29:00]

Dick Notter: [inaudible 00:29:20] was really there 50 years? John Ringling [inaudible 00:29:24].

And he really didn't know what was going to happen to him.

[00:29:30]

David Tetrault:

Yeah. Yeah.

Dick Notter:

Patty Zerbini offered him a job and a place to live. By the end, he told me, he had 36 different offers of places to sleep.

Frank Cancro:

Probably all from women.

Jerry Hogan:

You know, which is interesting. Scotty O'Donnell, who spearheaded this whole thing, wanted him as the grand marshal in his parade.

David Tetrault:

Oh yeah. That would have been fabulous.

[00:30:00]

Jerry Hogan:

He was a very quiet man. I usually joke with Sonny because he'd do the elephants in the third ring and Gunther was there or something like that. I said, "You've retired more times than Gunther." He was a great guy.

LaVahn Hoh:

Wasn't he? Wasn't he? Is he here?

Jerry Hogan:

No, I don't think so.

LaVahn Hoh:

Well, he's doing what he loves.

Jerry Hogan:

Fifty years.

LaVahn Hoh:

So, [crosstalk 00:30:23]

Jerry Hogan:

Two questions so far? I told you, two and a half hours of us clearing our throats.

[00:30:30]

LaVahn Hoh:

Yesterday, I think I had one and a half questions in an hour and a half. So. Keep them going. So, what's your favorite memory?

Frank Cancro:

Oh my.

Jerry Hogan:

Oh boy.

LaVahn Hoh:

I'm sure there are a lot of memories.

David Tetrault:

Yeah, that's a tough question.

Frank Cancro:

There are.

David Tetrault:

There is no one favorite. But one thing that was just an important symbol for me was after the hair hang girls, after that accident happened, when Samantha came

[00:31:00]

[00:31:30] back to the show and went up to do a preshow aerial performance. To me, that was just such a triumphant reclamation of what that whole tragedy had been. I just remember standing out there watching her and just being so moved by that. You know, a lot of that stuff. That happened a lot in relationship to other people and circumstances. You saw their victories and their ability to be committed to who they were and to what their skill and their art was. It was a lot of that, but that really did stand out to me when Sam came back. Now, she was the least hurt also.

[00:32:00] But the fact that she was willing to do that, that said volumes.

Jerry Hogan: When I was in the dovetail, the accident, I was not 20 minutes away. I get to the emergency ward and I'm in the emergency ward and they're working on him and stuff. It was awful. And [inaudible 00:32:21] "Father Jerry." Big smile. "Isn't God good? We're all alive." I'm going yeah, we're all alive, but there's a lot of broken bones in there. That's her spirit.

[00:32:30]

David Tetrault: And she's up in Montreal now working on a hair hang act.

Jerry Hogan: On a National Service Corp?

David Tetrault: Yeah.

Jerry Hogan: Yeah. Good for her. She's a good kid.

Frank Cancro: Dominic Jando likes to talk about - and I echo it - the whole notion of the circus. If the circus is about anything, it's about survival. The things that come to me, it's the same sort of things that you're talking about. The kind of surviving spirit that these people had. Even if they don't come back fully to what they were before, there's still something in there that's driving them on past what a lot of us would give up with. Gosh. We've been through so many accidents with them. The seven man high that fell in Richmond, you remember that? This thing went on and on and on, the drama of the fall and the things that went on later in the family. Being in the middle of all that, it went on for months. A silly thing like Tehar, remember Tehar? Yeah. He was playing with his pets in Hampton, Virginia in the Saturday matinee, and he took his final bow and he came off and he says, "I lost my finger." So I had to show up to the emergency department to get his finger sewn back on.

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[00:33:30]

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[00:34:30] Those kinds of things. The kid from Mission, Kansas, who was practicing his fire eating act in Richmond and a draft got in and put him in MCV. Those kinds of things. Rodney loves to tell the story about - again, another clown story - a whole bunch of them got sick on a Saturday. I mean the whole clown unit ended up in the emergency room in shifts. Taking the kids to the emergency room, hauling them back to the train, literally pushing their butts into the clown car, just to get them up. Those guys - and they still work. They still keep coming back. The train wreck. They're still working. They're there. There's something in them that drives them to continue telling the story of who they are in the circus.

[00:35:00]

Dick Notter: I remember when [inaudible 00:35:07] fell. I was in the audience when the Espana's went back to work, and I watched you almost the entire show and then I was

[00:35:30] backstage for a while and was watching you. It's amazing what you guys do and working with. That was such an emotional moment with the Espana's, the very first time to come back into the ring. So you deal a lot with the tragedies that happen with the circus. Obviously, there's the other side of the coin we talk about some of the wonderful things, the baptisms, the weddings -

LaVahn Hoh: How many baptisms did you do last year?

Dick Notter: I don't know. Not that many, really. I guess certainly the gratitude from the people from what seems like the little that we do is really impressive. It just really means a lot that we're there. It's hard to think of one favorite memory. I'm divided between a lot of the mud shows as well as the Ringling. So it's a variety of experiences there.
[00:36:00]

[00:36:30] What you're talking about, survival, I was on the ball with the Smithsonian festival, when the [inaudible 00:36:42] had their accident. I watched the scene [inaudible 00:36:46] trying to put out the fire on his sleeve. When we finally got it under control, he took the mic and he says, "Well, ladies and gentlemen, I'm going to have to take care of this. I'm going to first aid, but my family will continue." And they went on.
[00:37:00]

David Tetrault: And four days later he walked the wire and did a headstand.

Dick Notter: Did he?

David Tetrault: Yeah. First time ever in the hospital.

Dick Notter: Yeah.

Jerry Hogan: You know, some of the memories, I was thinking about Sacramento. You know, one of the - the first wedding I did on the show was Greg and Karen DeSanto.

David Tetrault: We did that one.

Jerry Hogan: It was at Boston.

David Tetrault: At Boston.

Jerry Hogan: All Saints Church. That's when Ringling played Boston for two weeks. It was a Monday.

[00:37:30]

David Tetrault: Yeah.

Jerry Hogan: It was great, because we set it all up. We got the church and we got the catering half price and the band half price. I had to get him a tux. He got a tux the day before. She had a gown and we did it, and the whole show came. Steve Smith was in town; it was fabulous. And we did it at this church. It was great. And years later, I got [inaudible 00:37:51] Emily here at the tent right here. Another way it kind of struck me, we were in - we were in Dallas going to Fort Worth but we had two
[00:38:00]

[00:38:30] weeks in Dallas. Vivian Espana was marrying Noey. Noey Espana. [inaudible 00:38:13] We had the Espanas and the [inaudible 00:38:17] big families. So they threw it at the Four Seasons on Monday, but it was great because we played golf that morning. We got on the place where they had the big tournament. We got on for free. Like 25 of us playing golf.

[00:39:00] Then we had the wedding at the church and this other priest who was very close to the Espana family, he was from California. He baptized in Fresno. He came. We did the wedding and we get to the reception. Everyone was invited, open bar. There's 300 something showing up. I remember Gunther running around with his little grandchild, and then they start to do the toast. At first, they do it in English, then they do it, naturally, in Spanish and Italian, and then they started throwing in things. The toast went in 28 languages. How in the same wedding - it's like in the United Nations. Oh yeah, I can do it in this. Every form of dialect - it was amazing. We counted them. It was the most amazing thing. I said, "Wow, this is really - I won't forget that." We talked about that a few times. That always reminded me what a good memory that was too.

[00:39:30]

David Tetrault: How about Mike Alder's wedding?

Jerry Hogan: Oh Mike Alder's wedding in Charlotte. Yeah, we did it in Charlotte. Yeah, we were getting ready to go and Gunther forgot the pillow with the rings. He had to run down to the bus to get them and get them all lined up. We get in the building. That was fun, yeah.

David Tetrault: Like a piece of Europe.

Jerry Hogan: Yeah.

David Tetrault: Remember that? We both said the same thing. It was lifted out of some piece of ancient elegance that would have been a part of Gunther's family.

[00:40:00]

Jerry Hogan: Yeah, it was a great - yeah, that was a long time too.

David Tetrault: That was a night, but it was such a superb wedding.

Jerry Hogan: Yeah. It was a good one too.

Frank Cancro: My joyful story is much more mundane and not at all involved with anything related to our ministries specifically, but, to be honest, it's the first time that I got pied on the show.

Jerry Hogan: Was it your birthday?

[00:40:30]

Frank Cancro: It was my birthday. I got pied. But of course what that means in terms of being part of who they are, that's really I think - that was just a neat thing to have happen. It happened in New Orleans and I was such an idiot that I didn't even see the setup

that they were going through. But that, I would have to say, if I have joy, it's the fact that what that stood for was that they really - we were part of them.

Jerry Hogan: Yeah.

[00:41:00]

Frank Cancro: That was an overwhelming thing for us not investing in the same way that they invested in their lives, we were a part of them, like I said. It was an amazing thing.

David Tetrault: The things they do for one another, like when they had birthday parties for the children, or the annual talent show wherever the event is or the annual hot dog eating contest - all this stuff is so gross and so beyond. Because you've got a bunch of professional people outdoing each other. And the talent, I was just amazed.

[00:41:30]

Jerry Hogan: There was one story. I don't know if you ever - I was in Boston a long time ago, and one of the workers. I forget his name, but it was a black man. They were doing the concert and he wanted to sing, and all of the guys were putting him down and stuff like that and he was going to sing. He got up there, and he had the most amazing voice. I think he sang the Lord's Prayer. Whatever it was, you could feel the whole transmission. The building, when he finished, everyone gave him a standing ovation. I mean, it was a guy who's on the floor, he's coming off the shift, and all of a sudden, he has this talent that's never been really captured. He really had it and he gave it to the people. Everyone appreciated it. That was like - oh man. Yeah. I'll never forget that.

[00:42:00]

[00:42:30]

Frank Cancro: And you never quite knew where some of the working guys would come from.

Jerry Hogan: Yes.

Frank Cancro: We heard stories that were very privileged.

Jerry Hogan: Yeah, unbelievable. Absolutely. When you get a chance to tell me your story, you sit on the tub and you listen to some of the stories; you've done that a lot, Frank. When you're strapped for time. It's amazing where some of them are coming from. You do it in espanol, too, sheesh.

[00:43:00]

LaVahn Hoh: So, we're documenting part of Ringling history. What is it you want people to know from your perspective and for what you did for the show?

Dick Notter: I probably split my time between many other shows and was probably on that Ringling unit less than these folks, but I think probably just being there was important. And even here, people are coming up to me that I don't even remember who remember me.

[00:43:30]

LaVahn Hoh: Sure.

[00:44:00]

Dick Notter: And I'm not sure I've contributed anything significant other than the fact that at

occasions I was there when people needed somebody. It was very rewarding to know that I was so well-accepted.

[00:44:30]

Frank Cancro:

One of the things that was kind of hurtful for me, and Jerry, you saw it too, at the shows, when we came on, Susana was still there, and Allen was still there, and they were very actively engaged with the show on the road. Richard was there. Tim Holtz, Barbara, they were all engaged deeply in this operation, and as time went on, I saw management pull back, pull back, pull back, pull back, and I remember

[00:45:00]

going to visit the corporate headquarters up in Vienna and talking to the Human Relations HR guy, and I realized he had no idea what was going on. And I said, "You guys will be making paper cups." And he just looked at me stunned. He had this deer-in-a-headlights look, and that's when I realized they had lost all of - there were people up in Vienna who had never been to any of the shows that they

[00:45:30]

produced. None of them. They used to be Saturday afternoon in Richmond, Virginia when the show was coming through. You remember that? They hauled everybody down. They stopped doing it. Little by little, it just sort of got trailed off, which I think is also a part of the disinterest in the whole - money, whatever, becomes the most important part of this.

[00:46:00]

You know, circus people aren't accountants. They're in there giving it from their body. After a while - my favorite picture of me in the show is one taken by the Virginian pilot. I'm standing beside the ring and I just have my hand in the air and I'm waving to one of the girls that's riding on one of the elephants in the opening

[00:46:30]

part of the show, inspect, and the astonishment of their faces when they realized that someone whom they knew was beholding them and just acknowledging them.

Jerry Hogan:

Like this.

Frank Cancro:

Yeah, yeah yeah.

Jerry Hogan:

They always do this.

Frank Cancro:

You noticed that too? It makes the difference.

Jerry Hogan:

It makes a difference.

David Tetrault:

That was the first thing he taught me was, "Come on, we got to go out so they can see us."

Jerry Hogan:

They've got to see us.

Frank Cancro:

[00:47:00]

They've got to see us. I mean, out in the ring. You've got to be out on top, on the other side of that black curtain so they can see. And it's true. It really is true. In fact, I don't know if Sister Dorothy told this story, but when they were getting ready to leave the Red unit, I think it was, a few years ago. Taylor Albin, who was the boss clown, was talking to Dorothy and talking about the ministry, their presence, what we all do, and Taylor said to her, "You know, you need to realize that when you all

- [00:47:30] are on the show, you really make a difference. It's like our grandparents have come to visit us." When Dorothy tells the story she changes it to parents. [crosstalk 00:47:33] He said grandparents. [crosstalk 00:47:37] But the point, the point is that there's something to this ministry of presence that does something to the company, that sense of being there is significant to them, that there's - it's okay.
- Jerry Hogan: And we're not part of it. We don't get paid. So we get out.
- Frank Cancro: It's a gift.
- [00:48:00]
Jerry Hogan: It's a gift. When you think about it - what was that question again, that you asked a few minutes ago - what do we want?
- LaVahn Hoh: What do you want people to know?
- Jerry Hogan: It's more than a performance. It's more than a business. It's a real life people, community being destroyed after 146 years. All that old tradition. That's why I think it's - what we're grieving - they used to use a marketing thing, a living treasure. It's a treasure that will go on in people's minds and people that are here today will really appreciate it because they lived it, and I think that's the most important thing. They made a business decision that I think they made very quickly and it's hurt a lot of people. It's more than a business. It's more than the performance.
- [00:48:30]
- [00:49:00]
Dick Notter: Sister Dorothy talked about when I think she was with the Blue Unit, and there was such a calm quiet about it. And she thought that the Red, because they weren't there, had a lot more turbulence.
- Frank Cancro: There was always a difference. I remember a few times I would be talking to her out front and say, "You guys need to get to the Red or you need to get to the Blue." And it was clear that it was a time there just needed to be - we basically dive in and out, but they were more consistent on the shows, and it really did show. Even in the mix of little things that were going on, you'd be walking down the hall and someone would see you and say, "Thank God you're here." You never even saw that person for two more days, but the fact that you were there was what was significant to them. You know, and then the word was out. Oh, Father's here.
- [00:49:30]
- Jerry Hogan: Yeah, absolutely.
- Dick Notter: Part of that, the grandfather thing is real. And I remember hearing this several times. When you've got a group of people who put on a show, with the energy and effort that they do, they can't be our age. So we represent something to them when we just show up. I remember coming in doing Easter at the armory in DC and having one of the employees come and throw his arms around me and just cried because he was so glad somebody came. And it was a performer, a big one.
- [00:50:00]
[00:50:30]

David Tetrault: I'm just thinking of the closing masses we did on the Blue and the Red. I mean, one, we had big chunks of the whole company show up. I mean, these were 20 minute wonders. Actually on the Red Unit it was like a 12 minute. We had to wedge it between the end of the show and pictures. The crowd of people that showed up was significant I think. I think when it come to meeting, which is one of the things that everybody sees, we become real symbols, or we're hooks for them to hang their meaning on I think more than anything. I think that's the important thing about the presence. So in those kinds of circumstances, they're there.

[00:51:00]

Frank Cancro: And to reflect that back in a way that allows that loop to grow where it's nothing but appreciation and love. Absolutely.

[00:51:30]

LaVahn Hoh: So do you have a funny story?

Frank Cancro: Oh my.

David Tetrault: I do. The first time we did sacraments together. We were walking out. Sister Dorothy always wanted a big trumpety entrance and people would walk around the ring in order to take their seats, so Jerry and I were walking in and these elephants shit in the ring. We're walking in in our liturgical vestments and we've got to dodge the elephant crap. In what other church do you have to worry about what ends up in the bottom of your shoe? But it's true, and there it was, somebody left some elephant crap out in the ring.

[00:52:00]

Frank Cancro: It's all invisible. [crosstalk 00:52:14]

Jerry Hogan: It was in Raleigh, North Carolina. It was in February, so all the wagons and the [inaudible 00:52:24] are in a separate building. I don't know if it was the intermission between shows, but a guy comes up to me and says, "Hey, Father, I want to go to confession." I said, "Okay, let's go over there." The cages are there. The tigers are there. So these are the cages, so I said, I'll stand here, and you just stand up like you're in confession. So he's telling me the confession and all of a sudden I get this smell. I was like oh geez. So I finish and I absolve and I turn and the cat's looking right at me, and I said, "Want to go next?" At least you got the front end. Well that's another story. I swear to God. They're moving the cats. Tail up, tail up. I didn't know what they were talking about. That's just rain. Oh. I had to go back to the monastery I was staying in and have a shower. Happened to me, all over.

[00:52:30]

[00:53:00]

David Tetrault: That's worse then elephant shit.

Jerry Hogan: Yeah. [crosstalk 00:53:25] I got baptized in tiger pee.

[00:53:30]

Frank Cancro: I have a favorite Barbara story.

Jerry Hogan: Okay.

Frank Cancro: Yes. And she's standing here. Do you - this was our baptism by fire. We were down in Lakeland and there's train everywhere and there's stuff going on and the spokesperson for the Greatest Show on Earth is being encountered by television and everything, and I have never seen or heard spin. Spinning. By the time she got done, all this stuff is going on, and all this craziness, is a tea dance. Any time - it's all fake news.

[00:54:00]

Jerry Hogan: Good fake news.

Frank Cancro: Every time they have fake news I think Barbara [crosstalk 00:54:20]. It was so good. You were superb. Superb.

Barbara: Thank you. Thank you so much. I loved it. Beyond belief.

[00:54:30]

Frank Cancro: I heard you do it several time. You could spin it. I mean, you're good.

Barbara: I mean, you learned. It wasn't even spinning, being able to know and teach people who were reporters, particularly, what they're looking at. Because we lost ringmasters that explained when they spoke and told you what you were seeing. So I would sit with reporters and say, "Do you know that lions live in prides? They live in groups. Tigers are solitary animals. If you can get two of them to lie down next to one another and not kill each other, that's enormous. So if you see ten tigers in a ring moving in unison -" You really understand what that means if somebody explains to you what you're seeing, so I missed having ringmasters do that, but it was a pleasure to do it for reporters. I loved that part of my job. It was great.

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[00:55:30]

Frank Cancro: By immersion for some people, I learned how to do it, watching you do it.

Barbara: Thank you so much.

Frank Cancro: To learn how to deal with the press and explain things in a way that makes sense. That's a real gift we got. I don't know. Did you pick it up too, Jerry?

Jerry Hogan: Oh yeah.

Frank Cancro: Remember when we had the incident with Rambo the Chipperfield tiger?

[00:56:00]

Jerry Hogan: That wasn't Rambo; it was Arnold, after Arnold Schwarzenegger, right? [crosstalk 00:56:04]

Barbara: Yeah Rambo was the young tiger that they had with the show that year that was traveling with them sort of learning and not ready yet.

Jerry Hogan: I was on Sarasota, and Tony [inaudible 00:56:19] the circus kids from different shows. My phone went off and it was [inaudible 00:56:23] and he said, "You gotta

- [00:56:30] get up there; we had an attack." So I ended up - I spent two days. I said, "Can I go home and change my underwear?" It's crazy because the Chipperfields got in.
- Barbara: Yes. It was wild.
- Jerry Hogan: It was wild.
- Barbara: That was absolutely wild. My first baptism by fire was the train accident. I started in '90, '89, '90, the end of Gunther's tour when Mark took over. Gunther was traveling with the show but wasn't performing. Everything was fine and things were going well. And then, boom. It was extraordinary, I think, to see that, go through that, love those people, and realize what had happened. So, yeah, that was a hard, hard lesson and a hard, hard thing to deal with when you care so much.
- [00:57:00]
- Frank Cancro: Every thing happens circus size, doesn't it, Jerry?
- Jerry Hogan: Yeah, oh yeah. It does.
- Frank Cancro: Everything is bigger than life because the show is. And so you have to move into the situation and manage it on that level. That's something I hadn't thought about before.
- [00:57:30]
- LaVahn Hoh: So what was your favorite city?
- Jerry Hogan: Oh. I got a few of them. Madison Square Garden. Show there. And the party was always pretty good. I loved New Orleans. I had some good times in New Orleans. I rode the train to New Orleans twice. That was a good city. I liked Cleveland, of all things. I enjoyed Cleveland. That was an interesting city show. I had a few cities I liked there.
- [00:58:00]
- David Tetrault: My favorite arena, because that's how I judge most cities, was Pittsburgh. I love the new arena that they use in Pittsburgh. And on the Gold Unit, Biloxi, Mississippi. Because it was always Fourth of July weekend so there was always a party. It's right by the beach and nice venue and it was always great to be with the gold group for that week. [inaudible 00:58:27]Do you have one?
- [00:58:30]
- Dick Notter: I'm not sure. Perhaps, and this might seem strange, Salt Lake City. I was traveling on the train for a couple of weeks preparing kids for their first communion and we were there and got to roam around and see a lot and ended up wandering into the building there in [inaudible 00:58:56]square where they do the genealogy stuff, and one of the elderly missionaries offered to assist me if I wanted to look up anything, and he found I guess what would have been my great grandfather's - he left [inaudible 00:59:18]on the ship to come over. So that was kind of a highlight for me. And it's just kind of a pleasant place to me.
- [00:59:30]
- LaVahn Hoh: How about the worst cities? [crosstalk 00:59:36]

- Dick Notter: Our first tour out, I'd never been in big buildings like that except as a customer, and suddenly you're going in the back door. Remember the [inaudible 00:59:45] arena? For the first show in there, right as they opened in Cleveland and we were treated so well because we didn't know any better. And I had to explore these buildings, and Madison Square Garden, once you get past that doorway and you've got the piece of plastic in your hand, they couldn't do enough for you. Vinnie and Lou, those two guys who always took care of you up on the fifth floor, "You look tired, Father." They put you in the Rangers' locker room to take a nap. The hospitality was incredible.
- [01:00:00]
- Jerry Hogan: Yeah, those too. I was in the building the last time they played at Cleveland, the Richfield. It's now a prison, I guess. I'm getting at the airport and going out and trying to find it. They put me out in a Holiday Inn, I think. There were all these farms. I said, "Is there an arena around here?" He says, "Yeah, go take a left." I've got all these cows and all of a sudden, there it is in the middle of nowhere. It was the Mongolian tour, the end of the Mongolian tour. Snowing. Next year, we were [inaudible 01:00:55]you know. Everything. My other favorite town is not even in America, it's Toronto. I loved it. I was there with the Gold show and I was there with the Red Show. I was there with the Blue show. That was really nice.
- [01:01:00]
- Frank Cancro: Did you go to Mexico?
- Jerry Hogan: Yes, twice.
- Frank Cancro: That was an experience.
- Jerry Hogan: Yeah. I did get Montezuma's Revenge, but that was [inaudible 01:01:19] The first time, they said, "Make sure you take a cab that's designated. Designated cab, because if you take another one, they'll shoot you and kill you and take your money." The next time they said, "We'll pick you up." They didn't even have a designated, a driver for me, because that's how dangerous it was. Oh yeah.
- [01:01:30]
- Barbara: [inaudible 01:01:38]was in a cab and got robbed.
- Jerry Hogan: Yeah, oh yeah.
- Frank Cancro: And then there was the guy that traveled with the show, remember that? He was like a foreign service officer that would go with the ICE shows to make sure that everything was done within the law and that we were protected moving from the hotel to the building, which was an old boxing arena. Dirty, dirty.
- [01:02:00]
- Jerry Hogan: Oh, it was awful.
- Frank Cancro: Filthy, dirty.
- LaVahn Hoh: Is that one of the worst ones, then?
- Jerry Hogan: That's one of the worst, yeah. That's where they had the [inaudible 01:02:08]city

years ago.

Frank Cancro: Pop singer, yeah.

Jerry Hogan: Up in the balcony, they had chicken wire, for cages to keep the poor people way up there. Oh yeah, it was way up in the top balcony. They called themselves a Spanish name.

Frank Cancro: Barkley Center.

[01:02:30]

Jerry Hogan: Oh I haven't been - was it awful?

Frank Cancro: It's not a bad building. It's the place where the clowns and makeup to start the second half of the act had to show their ID's to security before they let them down on the floor. That's the Barkley Center.

Jerry Hogan: Oh my God. [crosstalk 01:02:49]

Barbara: Lot of stealing at night. It's just not a comfortable -

Frank Cancro: What's the one in Texas that had the dirt floor?

[01:03:00]

Barbara: San Antonio?

Frank Cancro: Yeah.

Barbara: San Antonio. I thought the Cow Palace. That was the worst building I'd ever been in.

Jerry Hogan: Oh yeah, the Cow Palace. That was horrible.

Frank Cancro: That was where I got picked up by one of the Chipperfield elephants because I wasn't paying attention.

Jerry Hogan: Yeah, I didn't like the Oakland venue too. I was there so I could watch the Red Sox practice who were playing against Oakland. I'd go underneath the town to watch the Red Sox. That was Oakland. Yeah, I was at the hotel there on the corner, and you had to show your room key to get in because they had security thick because people were stealing cars in the hotel.

[01:03:30]

Barbara: The arena at the Cow Palace was the arena where finally the show figured out that I'm geographically dyslexic and I can't drive. I was left at the Cow Palace. The whole show was gone, and I was just standing outside hysterical crying. I don't remember how I got back to the hotel, but Chris Cross, bless her heart, whenever I was on that show, used to say, "Do not leave this arena until Barbara's at her hotel."

[01:04:00]

Jerry Hogan: Wow.

Barbara: They took care of me.

Jerry Hogan: There are some really interesting places.

Frank Cancro: Awful building.

Barbara: It was kind of scary to be there alone at night.

Frank Cancro: Scared to be alone in the daytime.

Barbara: So what was the strangest thing you ever saw in the show?

Jerry Hogan: Oh boy. Oh geez.

[01:04:30]
Frank Cancro: Claudia. Claudia at any given time. No.

Jerry Hogan: Well Claudia - I said the last Easter Sunday mass at [inaudible 01:04:37] and Claudia came dressed up on a camel as the Easter bunny.

Frank Cancro: As the Easter bunny. To mass.

Jerry Hogan: And people said, "What are you going to do?" Claudia said, "I'm going to work at a nursing home. I'm going to be stripper." Oh God.

[01:05:00]
Frank Cancro: We had mass one time - I think it was actually in Greensboro, North Carolina, and we used the laundry room. It was the only space we could get, and there were these little machine things in the center that we pushed over to the side and set up chairs. So we start mass and when we came in to do mass, I didn't think much of it, but there are all sorts of blankets and stuff thrown over those metal things that were there earlier. So I'm sitting down after the Gospel to preach, and all of a sudden, the claws on these metal things start moving. I'm thinking, "What the hell?" And all of a sudden Claudia's head comes out. She had made a little tent and was taking a nap. And when she woke up, she realized we were saying mass. So with her head out, she said, "Can I go to mass like this?" I said, "Sure Claudia."

[01:05:30]

LaVahn Hoh: So who is Claudia?

Frank Cancro: Claudia was the laundress. She did the wardrobe on the Red unit and she did the laundry and 80 million other things. Claudia was a free spirit, heck of a dancer, and for her age, great movement, great imagination. Every city she goes in, she takes flowing robes and fans and has her picture taken dancing in the wind wherever she can - she dressed up one day in a suit made completely out of drumsticks and symbols so she could teach rhythm to the kids in the school.

[01:06:00]

[01:06:30]
Jerry Hogan: Yeah, she's something else. She's great.

Frank Cancro: Great lady. But that would be - Claudia's my strangest thing.

Jerry Hogan: Who was the guy that sold programs and sells [inaudible 01:06:43] that also would come in at some point in some pretty strange outfits? Well never mind.

Dick Notter: I'm not sure we can top the Claudia story. [crosstalk 01:06:54]

David Tetrault: Yeah, Claudia's...

[01:07:00]
LaVahn Hoh: Who's the most memorable character or person or performer in your time at Ringling?

Jerry Hogan: You mean as the star, or - ?

LaVahn Hoh: Any star, worker.

Jerry Hogan: Oh boy. Well, Gunther, naturally. I mean. When he came back to do the show, to show how good he was, he came back for a while. He was unbelievable. He was like Babe Ruth, I mean, he was. [inaudible 01:07:37]

[01:07:30]

Dick Notter: I think Tamayara. And of course we could communicate in Spanish. I saw him in many different moods depending on the circumstances. Very free spirited in some ways. I really don't know how I want to describe it, but I would say he stood out for me.

[01:08:00]

David Tetrault: Can I have two?

LaVahn Hoh: You can have tons tonight.

David Tetrault: First would be Habibi.

Jerry Hogan: Oh, Habibi.

David Tetrault: Just because he's this Muslim guy, very observant, who ended up becoming our sacristan on the Blue Unit. He would make sure we were set up for mass, he would help set up for mass, he was just, for me, he was like a right hand guy. During the last Blue Unit, during winter quarters, when they had the accident in Globe, when Danny had his accident, I was there the day before you. They asked me would I bless the Globe. They weren't going to go back in it and rehearse in it until the Globe was blessed. And so I went in that morning early to bless it and Habibi meets me there. He takes me back to the Globe, he opens it for me. I go inside. Okay, God, bless this Globe, because I'm not quite sure what you say when you're blessing a globe, but keep it safe for them. He stood there with me the whole time. And then when I was finished with the Globe he said, "No, no, you're not done." He

[01:08:30]

[01:09:00]

wanted me to bless the motorcycles. He had this all laid out about - Habibi had that kind of focus of care for everybody and we talk about God together. I would pray with him.

[01:09:30] When he and Rathy would go off to pray, I'd go off with them sometimes. They'd do their midday prayers; I'd stand with them while they did their midday prayers. We'd always talk about what mosque they were going to, and if they didn't have a mosque in the city, I'd see if I could find one, but he just struck me as this guy who was really concerned about everybody. And he had a performance background from years ago. I think it was - was he trapeze?

Jerry Hogan: I think he had a Morocco connection. He was an acrobat.

David Tetrault: He was an acrobat, that's right. Yeah, because he's back in Morocco now. He's a taxi driver.

Jerry Hogan: Is he?

David Tetrault: [01:10:00] Yeah. But Habibi would be my first one. But the second one is actually Jonathan Lee Iverson. Because he's such a man of integrity. And that never changed. Jonathan is consistently that. In fact, about three years ago, I started talking to him about thinking about the ministry as a lifestyle for himself. He hasn't exclude it. He's got an integrity about him that, there's something there that I think we'll see down the line. I think he's a real man of integrity.

[01:10:30] LaVahn Hoh: I asked Sister Dorothy the same question. Guess who her number one was?

David Tetrault: Jonathan?

LaVahn Hoh: No, your number one.

David Tetrault: Habibi.

LaVahn Hoh: She was so impressed. He'd always set up the chairs, take them away, all of that.

David Tetrault: I'd come through the door and he'd be right there. What do you need? What do you need me to do? How long are you going to be here?

Dick Notter: [01:11:00] You know even at the point where he started doing that, I remember he would seek me out and just want to talk about anything really. Very respectful. I don't know how many times we had lunch together.

David Tetrault: Yeah. He was big about sitting down at the tables and having a lunch, yeah.

Dick Notter: Yeah, he was remarkable. I thought about it. Yeah.

Frank Cancro: And always there, you know. It wasn't an efficient way of doing things; it was a

sacred way of doing things.

David Tetrault: That's a really good point about that.

[01:11:30]

Frank Cancro: He's making a connection that he's not just changing something around. He's making a connection with something that nobody else can see except him because he feels that kind of thing. You know.

Jerry Hogan: He knew they weren't going to read him his papers. The company wasn't. So he wanted to stay. He really suffered through that.

Frank Cancro: Did you write him letters? [crosstalk 01:11:53]The company wouldn't write letters.

[01:12:00]

Jerry Hogan: I got lawyer for him. Contacted a lawyer down there. Yeah. That really pissed me off. There were a lot of things that pissed me off.

LaVahn Hoh: That's my next question.

Barbara: I was about to say. Do you have some more hours?

Frank Cancro: Be nice, Jerry, be nice.

Jerry Hogan: Yeah. Good man, and he got screwed.

Frank Cancro: Yeah. I have to say significant people with Gunther, because I watched him work a lot when I finally had a chance. I watched him work with a horse one night and I was absolutely amazing. Then I watched him - they put him out in the big cities only. Yeah. And I watched him prepare the act. One night I was watching him and I knew what was supposed to happen and all of a sudden I saw two more tricks I'd never seen before. I said, "How'd you do that?" He says, "I just thought about it and I did it." And that's why I began to understand that this man's mind was so instinctual and he understood that thing that was going on. Then he'd come into the arena on Conga.

[01:13:00]

Barbara: He also knew the business in a way that most people don't that work in it. When he retired and Mark Oliver took over, I didn't really have a chance to work with Gunther on a real act. If I could have in the 70's and 80's I would have been in heaven. But Mark Oliver didn't want to do a publicity thing in range. He was eighteen or nineteen years old at the time and whatever. And I went to Gunther and I said, "Gunther, it's show time. Show time means money. Those people pay for their entertainment." And he said, "Yes." And Gunther, the thing about him that was extraordinary for the marketing department, is he never said no to anything. What you would say is, "Gunther, I would like to bring an elephant here, or do this on a stage," and his answer would be, "I'll figure it out." He never said no to me, ever. When I asked for anything. It was always, "I'll figure it out." He brought three elephants and Grand Thomas Chipperfield to LA to do a live catapult off a teeter

[01:13:30]

[01:14:00]

board onto an elephant for the Jay Leno show. That never would have happened if Gunther hadn't been on the unit and made that happen.

[01:14:30] After Gunther left, couldn't do anything. Wasn't doable.

Jerry Hogan: I always tell the story of the time Gunther training some cats. I said, "What's wrong with those cats?" He said, "Father, they're stupid." They don't have the ability. We're going to ship them out. He wouldn't whip them. He just says, "They don't have it." Like a kid playing baseball, you know, he's not going to make it to the majors. He said, "No, they're not good enough. They're stupid."

[01:15:00]

Frank Cancro: I remember when he had the tumor and had the chemotherapy and I remember him coming up to me and he put his arms - he wanted to hug but said, "Don't squeeze me too tight; I smell bad."

Barbara: Last time, I have my favorite picture. Is me bald -

Jerry Hogan: Oh yeah.

Barbara: Him bald from chemotherapy, and [inaudible 01:15:24]. The two of us just our heads, yeah. He was great.

[01:15:30]

David Tetrault: Remember doing the elephant walk going back to the train that night. That was one of my favorite moments.

Jerry Hogan: Yeah I was there when he - sort of a long story, but when he was [inaudible 01:15:47]dying, this is early June, maybe middle June. He died at the end of July. I

[01:16:00] got a call from Rahi and Rahi said Jerry, Kenneth wants us to start working on Gunther's funeral. It's going to be [inaudible 01:16:07] planning it what to do. So we called ourselves the White Unit, for resurrection. The Red, the blue, and the white. So we started talking and we're going back and forth, and where we're going to do it. We went to that. We went down to Florida. We went down [inaudible 01:16:25] two days. We went to the museum and we went back and forth to

[01:16:30] different venues and then, we ended up at the Catholic church there in Venice. We got a contact. So we went down there and Peggy says, "Let's call and go over." So Patrick's there. Patrick's not in the same spot anymore. So we call up, get the family, on our way. They said, "Gunther would love to see you." They said he was just starting hospice.

[01:17:00] So I'm getting up to the front and there's a guy standing out there. He's sitting down. I thought maybe the hospice nurse having a smoke or something. It's Gunther. He knew we were coming and he came in and he wanted to greet us. And we got these big bear hugs. We talked back and forth, but even before that, a few weeks before, I did a wedding down there. She was a skater, then she became a promoter, I got that pretty well, calling, she remembered this kid who now

[01:17:30] [inaudible 01:17:33] shows up in Vegas - Peterson was his name. So we're doing a

wedding in St. Michael's in Sarasota. He has the key. So I get down there for the wedding rehearsal and they all say, "Gunther's here! Gunther's here." Because [inaudible 01:17:47] was doing weddings. She was a wedding planner. She was doing the wedding planning. So Gunther came. They said he wants to see you.

[01:18:00] So I get on the pew and Gunther's in the pew and he says, "Father Jerry, they've put too much medicine. My wires are all goofed up. They don't know what's going on. I think it's almost the end." So I walked to my car. I know he's a baptized Catholic but I brushed him and anointed him and stuff like that. He was a good chap. It was really unbelievable. Then the next time I saw him, it was a few weeks later. And then it was two weeks after we saw him that he passed away. We had planned the whole thing.

David Tetrault: It was very unique. [inaudible 01:18:34] would say it was Catholic light. We had a big dress rehearsal for the thing.

Jerry Hogan: Oh yeah, it was pretty [inaudible 01:18:40] too. So we got this guy as a deacon and he works with the undertaker, and they wanted to do this and make all this crap like that. So Kenny pulls me aside. "What should I know that I don't know?" That's one of his favorite lines. So I said, "They want your money." And he said, "Oh I know that." I said, you know, they're going to bury him up - we're going to do the burial at night, after we do the mercy meal. This church had a big hall so we were going to have the mercy meal. So then we're going to do it after that. He says,

[01:19:00] "Yeah, we're going to bury him beside Mickey [inaudible 01:19:21]," who was the chimp guy, who I didn't know who it was. Kenny turned white. He says, "Oh my God." I said, "What's wrong?" He says, "My father died at Mickey [inaudible 01:19:38] funeral. He gave the eulogy, and I was taken off. I said, "I have to go, Dad." So I went down to the airport. My father went to the grave, and they got to the grave, and he started feeling funny. He couldn't get out of the car. So he had a heart attack and went to the hospital. That's where my father died. I brought that up. You know, you don't know.

[01:20:00] We all hightailed it out there that night. We were afraid because the [inaudible 01:20:12] people were all over the place during the funeral.

David Tetrault: Because at first, we went to the building. [inaudible 01:20:18] wanted to go to the building where he first performed, so we're in the old building, no air conditioning, it's July, so it must have been 120 in the building. [crosstalk 01:20:29]

[01:20:30] Jerry Hogan: The airport hangar. And you've got the funeral parlor was this big one that's the museum now, and then we had to take it from there and we went around and there's all these protesters in front of the church, and then we had the meal. [inaudible 01:20:55]

[01:21:00] LaVahn Hoh: Two days in a row. So [inaudible 01:21:10] [crosstalk 01:21:12] So what's the greatest thing that you can take away from your time at Ringling?

- [01:21:30]
Frank Cancro: All of this. Being immersed in something that is such a uniquely complex structure that somehow continues to go in some form or other, because there's always somebody that's walking that thinks they can do something in front of people that other people can't do. To love it. [inaudible 01:21:51] Being around the circus, I
- [01:22:00] I guess a lot of entertainment people is just such a shot. There's such an energy there. I think that's the thing that keeps me interested. It's unique and there's nothing like it.
- David Tetrault: I just keep thinking of one line from Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians. "We call this treasure [inaudible 01:22:29]."
- Dick Notter: Yeah.
- [01:22:30]
Frank Cancro: The treasure. I thought that was Shakespeare. [crosstalk 01:22:34]
- Dick Notter: Not only the circus mystique but the community was so international I think was one of the things that you don't find too many places.
- [01:23:00]
- Frank Cancro: It's kind of what baptism claims to be but often isn't.
- Dick Notter: Yeah. Good point.
- Jerry Hogan: It's the people. It's the people. Once you get hooked - you have to love the circus naturally but you have to love the people. Very similar to a parish, but it's universal.
- [01:23:30] Being here these few days and seeing people you haven't seen in a long time. Lots of memories. All positive.
- Frank Cancro: How, after years of doing it, how you see this thing sort of develop and how it grows and comes and rises and falls I think about doing Patrick Cashing's wedding in Madison Square Garden and then he died, you know. These things that go on, these people we come into their lives and then lose them.
- [01:24:00]
- Jerry Hogan: All we're taking from this is that it's the end of an era for Ringling Brothers, but it's not the end of the circus.
- Frank Cancro: Oh no.
- Jerry Hogan: What we learned in Washington, especially that town meeting, is there's so much more energy and creativity and what's going to develop in the future is going to be so so different and so exciting. Several [inaudible 01:24:34] of the world are bringing us to a different dimension [inaudible 01:24:37] too. So I think that that's real positive and that is positive for our ministry. That's what we're talking about here. Where we go from here, reaching out to these people, letting them know that we're available.
- [01:24:30]

- Dick Notter:
[01:25:00] I think one of the interesting things is thoughts of the next generation growing into the business. So many of these little kids who are now very talented performers. I think Tabitha [inaudible 01:25:13]you know, who's this year going to be a ring master for the show. She was an understudy on the Ringling show and got to perform once and that was enough. And now she's got a job on a different show.
- [01:25:30]
- Frank Cancro: Gabriel Alvez is at the Globe with Dan.
- Dick Notter: Good.
- Frank Cancro: He did some trapeze stuff with his dad and really got into wanting to do this and now he's featured with Danny and the Globe. You're right. He's a teenager.
- Jerry Hogan:
[01:26:00] The transition circus [inaudible 01:25:53]on the west coast. The family [inaudible 01:25:55] Ringling and then [inaudible 01:25:58] and then they bought the circus. But to see their kids being on the show and taking different leadership roles every year [inaudible 01:26:09] that's exciting.
- Dick Notter:
[01:26:30] What's the price of separation for those children from the culture, the larger culture, and the education they might get? It's not 1950, it's not the greatest show on earth, not as it was under canvas and altered it. It was very different than it is now.
- LaVahn Hoh: So who's following in your footsteps?
- David Tetrault: Well that's the 64 million dollar question.
- Dick Notter: I can't worry about it. [crosstalk 01:26:46]
- Jerry Hogan:
[01:27:00] Connecticut. He's a great kid. They just moved him from parish to be the head of the locations. I'm really trying to get him to come down January. He was with us through the summer. He's a very talented guy. The priesthood is changing too and evolving and combining, and we've had people who have approached us. There was another guy that we're starting to communicate with. He's a Franciscan. [crosstalk 01:27:18]
- Frank Cancro: He showed up wanting to friend me and talk. [crosstalk 01:27:23]
- [01:27:30]
- Jerry Hogan: I communicated with him. He's [inaudible 01:27:29] school, so. So anyway, there's a possibility there but the future if we don't get to decide would be nice to have any kind of [inaudible 01:27:38] it's just stuff like that. So we go home. We go home where the future is. We go with the spirit. It happens, you know.
- David Tetrault: I think the thing that Kennedy said is not just anybody can do this ministry.
- LaVahn Hoh: I was about to say that too.

David Tetrault: That really is key. Do no harm. Exactly. First rule.

[01:28:00]
Jerry Hogan: Sometimes they say, you know, we have to educate the public, we have to educate our parishioners, but we have to educate our brothers in the faith in the clergy, because some of them have no concept of what we do. We're always educating them. They just think - there's all these kinds of stereotypes of these people - gypsies, tramps, and thieves. Even now, in this day and age, we go back. So always -

[01:28:30] this movie, after circus, that they're showing, 8 churches this past summer that I was in. There are people who didn't know I was in there. Once they saw the movie, [inaudible 01:28:38] still performing and see [inaudible 01:28:41] and see Jackie and Claire and see that. It really breaks down a lot of barriers.

Dick Notter: Oh but to know those people.

Jerry Hogan: Oh yeah.

Dick Notter: To be able to spend time with them.

[01:29:00]
Jerry Hogan: Yeah, it's good.

Dick Notter: Yeah. [crosstalk 01:29:01] report to Jackie La Carte at least twice a week.

Jerry Hogan: I love Jackie.

Dick Notter: Crazy guy.

LaVahn Hoh: Okay. I've asked a lot of questions. I have the pages here. And you guys answered a lot of the questions that I didn't even ask. Is there anything else that you would like to say? Anything else that's popping to your mind?

Jerry Hogan: I think it's a great privilege to be able to have this stuff recorded in the archives. I think not too many people - and our ministry has grown a lot, but they don't have a lot of sense of what it is.

[01:29:30]

Frank Cancro: I'm sad the Sisters of Jesus weren't here.

Jerry Hogan: Yeah. They were one of those early ones.

Frank Cancro: Yeah, I was telling [inaudible 01:29:45] about it. They're invisible.

Jerry Hogan: Yeah, they're invisible, and they wanted to be that way. When they met the Pope, I was there, the first day they met the Pope, Pope John Paul II [inaudible 01:30:02] that's the whole criteria. No one knows what they do. They would just be there, they would do religious education and stuff like that. Jobs.

[01:30:00]

Dick Notter: And their biggest ministry [inaudible 01:30:12]

Jerry Hogan: Yes, there's that.

Dick Notter: That and just being there.

Jerry Hogan: Yeah.

Dick Notter: Great.

Jerry Hogan: Good people.

Dick Notter: Yeah.

Jerry Hogan: Absolutely.

[01:30:30]

Dick Notter: I'd just say in terms of the international aspect of it it's much more highly organized in Europe than it is here. [inaudible 01:30:38] and of course they have an ecumenical organization that is very active working not only with circuses but amusement parks, and there's some beautiful presentations. I guess they've got some finances that go with that to do this.

[01:31:00]

Frank Cancro: The circuses have a different type of culture, too. [inaudible 01:31:18] I don't know what the costs are to go to a show. My family comes home, and they've had a wonderful show, but they've paid too much for the popcorn and bla bla bla. So all that gets mixed into the stuff.

[01:31:30]

David Tetrault: As much as it's a privilege, that this ministry is getting focused on.

Frank Cancro: The ministry is a privilege to do.

Jerry Hogan: Oh yeah.

Frank Cancro: It's a privilege to be here. I have gained far more I think from the folks that I work with. I wonder sometimes if they ever gain from me, but it's just a privilege. That's a treasure.

[01:32:00]

Dick Notter: And the characters that we've met. This guy drives a bus, a day bus - you never knew where he was from, his name will come to me - Big Joe. [crosstalk 01:32:11]

Jerry Hogan: Big Joe. He had his toes removed.

Dick Notter: Oh.

Jerry Hogan: He's married. He lives in Vegas now. He moved back to Venezuela for a while. Big Joe Carn from Philadelphia. From Philly.

[01:32:30]

Dick Notter: His great line to me was - I'd been on the show for a while; I'd finally come up. He says, "I think you're okay now." I said, "Well, thanks, Big Joe." He says, "You know, my job is to make sure that the girls get from the building to the bus to the 20. That's my job. I would give my life for them. I would give my life for you."

Jerry Hogan: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. That's Joe.

Dick Notter: That's Big Joe.

[01:33:00]

LaVahn Hoh: I think that's a good place to end. Thank you gentlemen.