

## CWM Audio 70-8

### Lewis Glover, Lisa Glover, Marissa Hitchcock, and Julie Harter Interview by Nancy Davies July 21st, 2017

#### Part 3

Interview conducted by Nancy Davies

- Nancy Davies: Alright. Interview section three, with Louis, Lisa, and Marissa. Let me go here to Lisa, because you met your husband on the unit. And let's talk about that. How did that happen?
- Lisa: Well, I actually met him the first day when Marissa ... I got into the building in Oklahoma City, and Marissa was showing me around, introducing me to everybody, because Marissa-
- [00:00:30]  
Marissa: It's all my fault, sorry.
- Lisa: ... Everybody on the show. So we walk by the portal, I think, and she goes, "Oh yeah, that's Pyro, he does the pyrotechnics. His real name is Louis but we just call him Pyro." And after that I think I eventually forgot your name, and I didn't actually-
- Lewis: You didn't really [crosstalk 00:00:48] just a hangout type thing. So things were in motion, you were still trying to get your showgirl speed up, so to speak.
- [00:01:00]  
Lisa: So then later on in the next tour I had to go to the emergency room, and he had been promoted to manager trainee, so he was pegged the one to go with me.
- Marissa: Fate.
- Lewis: Fate.
- Marissa: Started hanging-
- Lewis: So after that it was just kind of like the lost puppy syndrome, she started hanging out with me a lot more.
- Nancy Davies: Oh, I see.
- Lewis: [00:01:30] And again, train runs are long. Things happen, and one thing led to another. After that we kind of became best friends. Somebody tried to keep it low-key, but I was smitten. I got hit, and I knew that was it. I said, this is it. This is who I need to be with.
- Nancy: And from when you met until when you got married, how long was that?

Davies:

Lewis: A year?

Lisa: About a year.

Lewis: About a year. We got married in Buffalo Sabres arena, from her hometown, Buffalo, New York.

Marissa: They were one of the cutest couples on tour. Lots of couples on tour, but they were one of the cutest couples on tour, they were adorable.

[00:02:00]

Nancy Now most people don't get to live and work with their spouse.

Davies:

Marissa: It's trying.

Nancy Yeah, that's my question.

Davies:

Lewis: We've had our fights. I won't say we didn't have arguments, we've seen arguments. As it says this is one of the things that has to wreak her terms.

Lisa: Your friends, your boss-

Lewis: It can be a soap opera.

Lisa: ... Your boss sees your arguments. Everybody knows everybody else's business.

Lewis: "Why is Lisa not performing correctly today? Did you guys have a fight?" And we're like, "No."

Marissa: Thing is they'd go to you first before they'd come to me, and be like, "Why is she doing that?" I'm like, "I don't know, go ask Louis."

[00:02:30]

Lewis: Yeah, talk to her dance captain. Ups and downs, and you see who's done well, or who hasn't done well, or what's working.

Lisa: Life on the road I think also can make a relationship a lot stronger than normal. Because you're constantly together. But it's the thing, if you're constantly together, like with my ex-husband the clown, I would see him when we would go into work, and then I wouldn't go to clown alley or anything or visit him as much as possible, until the end of the night. So we could at least come home and talk about what did you do for work today? You know, because we were all in the same production numbers. You too, I mean you were all over the place.

[00:03:00]

Lewis: That was a lot of floor. She could smell me when I was there with my cologne, she was like, "Oh, my husband was just here." If I didn't get to talk to her. And I always tried to make her mess up, so ... Keep her professional.

Marissa: He used to sit, he'd sit in the seats on Sundays. Because his office would close up at the beginning at the day. They had this wagon, and anything not essential had to go first. So obviously your office was not essential on Sundays. So he would be sitting out in the seats during the show, waving, eating cotton candy, showing up in [inaudible 00:03:35].

[00:03:30]

Lisa: Well he would always make us laugh, no matter what. When he wasn't getting his ear ...

Lewis: Getting my ear ripped off. [crosstalk 00:03:43] We have our bumps and bruises on the show.

Nancy: Well let's talk about that. Because there are things that happen. What stands out in your  
Davies: mind that, oh okay, Marissa's pointing at you.

Marissa: We just told this story to each other yesterday at lunch.

[00:04:00]

Lewis: Okay, so I'll tell that one. Like you said, a lot of bumps and bruises. The show is supposed to be the same song and dance for two years. But after a while, you know what, you find out you can have a little fun, change things up every once in a while. We had an act, the gentleman's name was Christian Degraaff, his stage name was Satani Demon, but we knew him as the Emperor of Inferno.

[00:04:30] So as the pyro technician at the time, I was privileged to work with the gentleman, and get to know some of his secrets, and he confided in me and stuff. And kind of had to, because it was just kind of the law. And being the pyro guy, I've always kept that and I'll take that to the next century, because I plan to live forever. So the act was his blades, and spitting fire and things like that, and the girls, Marissa and a couple of our other girls here, Donna, who's out there, gets her interview later, wearing these really beautiful costumes. They were red, kind of flames, the whole thing was all about fire. And of course, he had knives and everything else. You had this big stand that looked kind of mean and crazy. I'd hand him his stuff and what not, work with the girls coming in and out and stuff, and help him with his props.

[00:05:00]

[00:05:30] So one night, for some reason they had these masks that they had to wear while they were dancing on the ring curbs while Christian was doing his act. And you know, jewels, and casts the sparkles here and there. I guess one of the jewels fell off, and the hook that it was attached to was still open. So Sandy, one of our dancers, had come off the floor, and I was exchanging torches with the mask, giving her mask back to her mask, and I turned and just at the right moment, because she turned, very long legs, this young lady, turned and hooked my ear with the mask. And she's not paying attention because she's kind of starting to let the thing go across her hand, and she's dragging me. And I'm just screaming and yelling, "Sandy! Sandy! Sandy! Stop! Stop! Stop! You're ripping my ear off!" You know, so I have a nice little hole. It's healed up, but ...

Lisa: The clown gag now in the middle of this dramatic fire act.

[00:06:00]

Lewis: Yeah, everybody's kind of looking around, and she finally figured it out. And we're standing around, Christian's like, "You want to get out of my act? Hey, what are you guys doing here, what's going on?" And I'm like, "Ahh, ow." So we kind of stepped off, and we fixed it up. And of course you could hear everybody laughing in the audience, in the darkness and everything else. It's one of many moments that ... It's obscurity you remember.

[00:06:30] Regardless, we could remember Eddie Delmoral. The clowns had a fire gig. And it was always, like getting the kitty out of the tree, and you would hear a lot of things. And they used to pull this tiger out of the tree. You'd hear the kitty sounds and then it turned into a tiger. Well one year, Eddie Delmoral threw a rabbit in there. To change it up. And you know, we're all laughing, just giggling. We couldn't stop laughing.

There was the time that our queen of the Nile herself, Miss Marissa-

[00:07:00] Marissa: Oh yes.

Lewis: ... Decided not to do her bit, and a young gentleman by the name of David.

Marissa: Madison Square Gardens.

Lisa: Madison Square Gardens, on a Saturday night seven o'clock show.

Lewis: Saturday night, took her place as Cleo.

Marissa: He told me, he goes, "You are not going to be Cleopatra. We're changing roles." So I borrowed a tux from Katie Buyers, and I stood on the floor, like this, and he put on my dress and my cape and rode the floats.

Lewis: Nobody knew it on the floor.

[00:07:30] Marissa: In the middle of Madison Square Garden. So I can't get in trouble, my performance director told me to do it.

Lewis: Yeah. So he's up there, he's all dressed, he's got full drag on, looking absolutely beautiful. David [inaudible 00:07:41] the star of the show, did not know. I don't think Eric even knew anything. Because Eric was still on the floor.

Marissa: No, Eric was mad, Eric was mad. Because the ring master's singing and he turns around and he's expecting to see me and David Larible, and he turns and he sees David in my dress and my cape.

[00:08:00] Lewis: And the float comes out, and Kaiser's on it, and he's laughing so hard he can barely stand, because he's facing the float to lead the float onto [inaudible 00:08:03], and he's just laughing so hard. And we're just all looking like, "What? What? Oh my..." And he

couldn't stop. Of course, you know, people got in trouble for it, but it's a memory.

Marissa: It was something that broke up the monotony of doing all of these shows.

Lisa: Madison Square Garden.

Marissa: You know, we do three shows, and then tear down because of a hockey game, then get up in the morning and set up again, and then do three more shows.

[00:08:30]

Lewis: Oh yeah. Sleepless nights.

Nancy  
Davies: And I don't think people realize, who are just sitting in the audience, well, to a certain extent they do ... But the massiveness of putting that show up and down. But mainly up.

Lewis: Oh, it's all about the skill. You learn the skill. If you don't learn the skill, you're gonna get left behind. You know, the US Army has looked at us over the years on how to look trancid, how to pack. Stack them, pack them, and rack them.

Lisa: My friends love it when I help them move. Because I know how to pack trucks and everything.

[00:09:00]

Lewis: You learn how to do a spacial dimension.

Lisa: Basically virtual tetris. Getting everything in.

Lewis: Exactly, exactly. Putting the show up takes roughly 12 hours. A good show, which we've had the privilege of being parts of, we can get the show put up, the show ready in 12 hours. Of course, we start at 5 AM in the morning and we're ready usually by 7 PM at night. And we can do a show.

Lisa:  
[00:09:30] And all of the performers, no matter what you do, dancer, clown, trapeze artist, lion tamer, whatever, almost everybody chips in.

Marissa: Has an extra job that they do.

Lisa: Has an extra job that they do. And it makes you feel part, more of a family. I can't even speak right now.

Nancy  
Davies: Well it's a great equalizer too, I would think.

Marissa: Oh yeah.

Lisa: I think I had four at one time.

Lewis: Right.

- Lisa: When you had to live at the arena and I was separated from everyone else, I did like four jobs. Just because that's where you were all day.
- Lewis: Oh yeah. Then we could have the show out in four hours. And then train loaded within an hour or two, depending on our location.
- Marissa: One of my favorite stories, I think you guys were on the road, was pulling into [inaudible 00:10:00] Colosseum. We were coming in from New Jersey, and there was a blizzard. So the train is pulling in, there's a fire. It's an electric rail, and the train catches fire, something sparked, I just remember Keith Green, fire shot up through his toilet. And we were in a tunnel, going to Long Island, and I wasn't on the train, I went overland. But the show was supposed to start at 7:30, doors are at 6:30. The audience is in the seats, the train is pulling in at 7:00. So there's no rubber on the floor, nothing. No boxes, I think the animals were walking.
- [00:10:30]
- So we're all going, "What do we do now?" Because people are in the seats, and we have no props, no lights, no band, and I just remember they said, "Just go to the arena," and everyone chipped in. So there was a wardrobe box, and they had all the dancers go, "Whatever shoes you've got on, just go put on a costume, and start setting up the band." So we're pulling rubber, we're hooking up cables, and band stands, while the audience is watching. And that is one of my favorite stories, like yeah, you want to see people pull together ...
- [00:11:00]
- And David Larible went up and bought clown makeup, the kit that they sold in concessions, to put his makeup on so he could do something. Scott Osgood climbed up onto the truss, and jumped off without, you know, he did a dive from the rigging instead of his platform. He just climbed off the rigging and just jumped off into an air mattress. And the people who had their own personal animals, it's like, "Can you do something?"
- [00:11:30] So they're just trying to piece together some semblance of a show to keep the audience entertained while we're trying to get it all set up. Which like he said, takes normally about 12 hours. And we're just, you've got dancers in half costumes, running around in tennis shoes or combat boots and sequins, running around pulling rubber, putting the truss together. But that was one of my favorite things every time.
- So it's the same building that the final show for [inaudible 00:11:53] was in. So when I went there, I'm going, "Oh gosh, I remember this." I mean we were all laughing so hard, but we were all panicking, going, "What do we do? What do we do?" And I think they refunded everybody's money, or gave them tickets to another night. But it's like, "How do you do that?" Show's supposed to start in a half an hour, and we have nothing off the train. Nothing.
- [00:12:00]
- Lewis: [inaudible 00:12:15] Basically [inaudible 00:12:16]. The show must go on.
- Marissa: Speaking of that, living carousel. We all have these staffs, and the whole cast is in white, and we're going around the track, and they're moving these big staffs that they're carrying, mostly the production men, up and down, kind of like a carousel. And so the music is playing, the band's playing, all of a sudden something happens, and the speakers stop. And the whole cast stops for a second, we look at the ringmaster, and he

[00:13:00] starts singing, even though he's not on the mic, the whole cast starts humming and singing. And we finished the number, we got a standing ovation, I got chills thinking about that. Because I laugh all the time, the whole sound system went down, the band's still playing, so if you're close to the band, you could hear.

Lisa: What was going on.

Marissa: Basically. But the entire cast just started, "Du, du, du, dah du, dah du" everybody. And the audience gave us a standing ovation for that. I thought that was great. Because we're just like, what do you do? Okay, just keep going.

Lisa: The Hungarian troop actually continued that after. Because they were behind me, so every show, even with the music I would hear them going, "Da da da dah da da," and they kept doing it like every show after that.

[00:13:30]  
Nancy  
Davies: I want to talk a little bit about the elephants, because I overheard you talking about some great stories. And you worked in animal care too.

Lewis: I, that was my first, yeah. My first lesson to not get a trunk wrapped around your neck.

Nancy  
Davies: Because I've walked backstage when no one knows I'm gonna be there, and I just see sometimes just the sweetest things happening.

Lisa: Oh.

Nancy  
Davies:  
[00:14:00] You know, washing them, and the elephants playing with the water with the caretaker, and I know that you become very close to these animals that you become very close to these animals that you're working with, that you're riding. And I want to hear some of your experiences in working with them.

Lisa: One thing that we had to tell all the new working men was, do not take your paycheck and put it in your back pocket of your jumpsuit. Because if they're putting sawdust down backstage, elephants would reach out, and boom, your paycheck is gone, it's in their gullet not.

Lewis: Yep. My experience was with Luna.

Lisa: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Luna.

[00:14:30]  
Lewis: Luna, and being an animal lover, always will, I will choose an animal over a human. You know, it depends of course, but ... But there was just a couple that just had a look. Turn your back on me and I will ruin your day. I will ruin your day. And Luna was one of them.

Lisa: She was particular. Very particular.

[00:15:00]

Lewis: You know, Pete Simmony, we miss you brother, when I first started in Charleston, West Virginia, I was right into the middle of a tornado watch, wind was blowing, so I'm holding on to a pole in the old animal tent.

Marissa: That was my wedding day. My circus wedding, and so he joined on my wedding day.

Lewis: So we're having this big huge storm, and it's blowing, and he's just like, "Hey, put your foot there and hold it like this, and just hold on tight, you know?" And I'm like, oh God, what did I get myself into? I'm twenty something, [inaudible 00:15:24], what did I get myself into? I'm like, this is not right. But next thing I know, I feel a trunk start to wrap around my neck. And Pete comes running over, and smacks her trunk out of the way, and says, "You gotta watch Luna. Don't turn your back on her." Of course, I've got horses on one side, and the elephants on the other side trying to reach for me, and I'm thinking, "I'm gonna get killed right here, my first day." But you could see it in her eye. She just gave you that look. And there was a couple other cats that had that look too that I saw, "You just turn your back on me. Turn your back on me."

[00:15:30]

[00:16:00]  
Lisa: But then you got Asia. Sweet ole Asia.

Lewis: Sweet ole Asia, baby Tonka, Asan, Toby.

Lisa: Sara.

Lewis: Sara.

Lisa: Banana.

Lewis: Banana. You know, you are told not to get close. Especially for the new people, it takes time, and you want to do it the right way. You want to take the time to get to know the animals. So I got to know a lot of the horses, I started learning the names of the elephants, and knowing what they looked like and who they were. You start to see the quirks, just like any human.

[00:16:30]

Marissa: Personality differences.

Lewis: You see the personalities.

Lisa: You can tell them, from the front who they are, and from the back. You can look at their butts and go, that's baby, that's bonko, yeah.

Lewis: And again, I gotta say it's the boss and his son who treated me with respect.

Lisa: Yeah, we all had the pleasure of working with Gunther Gable Williams and Mark Oliver Gable, and Tina Gable.

[00:17:00]

Lewis: And he taught me a lot. Not that I didn't already have the respect for animals. But he



- would say, you gotta be careful doing this, you gotta be careful doing this. Of course, at that time I was still young, and had transferred out of the animal department, but still worked closely because I was in the backstage props after that. It was still a lot of fun, doing these things I was still working with the animals. And then I was always walking a horse here or walking a horse there.
- [00:17:30]
- Lisa: Animal walks, unloading. Doing this. [crosstalk 00:17:42]
- Lewis: It was a sad thing. But I knew what elephants I could stand close to, but you'd always see Luna, she was always eyeing. I think she was always eyeing me, I think she wanted to do something.
- Marissa: I think she just eyeballed everybody. She was like crazy eye from Orange is the New Black, just eyeballing.
- [00:18:00]
- Lewis: But you've gotta look at the care. I've never ever seen people who care so much. I'm not saying we haven't had a couple knuckle heads. People are human. Sometimes we've had stupid humans. But, cared for, loved, well taken care of, watched.
- Marissa: Mark grew up with a lot of those elephants.
- Lewis: Mark grew up with them, he set the standards. Boss, again, our nickname for Gunther, [00:18:30] he set the standards, Mark took the standards, set them even further, and you learn it. And if somebody got out of hand ...
- Lisa: They were gone.
- Lewis: They were gone.
- Marissa: They're on the bus that day.
- Lewis: We'll see you later. [inaudible 00:18:39]
- Marissa: My biggest animal experience is working with Mark and Gunther and Tina and everything, I got to ride, which was, I was like oh my gosh, I get to ride on an elephant. Which is something that I guess, while I was there I took for granted. Because you think it's gonna last forever, and I bring people backstage, I'm like, there's the elephants, [00:19:00] there's the tigers, okay, because we see it every day. And once I left the show I'm like, oh my gosh I miss them so much. And my biggest thing was when they asked me to go to the blue unit to work the elephants with Troy, who's coming today. I can't wait. And Gunther pulled me up, because he didn't have girls working in the barn at all, it was always guys. And he pulls me aside and he goes, "Marissa, you don't like it over there, you come back and work for me any time." And that was the biggest compliment ever, [00:19:30] because Gunther Gable Williams would have hired me back if I didn't like my job over there.
- Lewis: Right.

Marissa: Special place in my heart. Yeah, when he would go visit the blue show and I was on the red, we'd go to his train room and hang out with his wife and Tina and I'd drink all of his [inaudible 00:19:45]. Yep, I loved the train runs when he was gone. We played Monopoly.

Nancy Lisa, do you have any stories of an animal, or on the floor?

Davies:

Marissa: An animal other than Louis.

[00:20:00]

Lisa: One of the funny stories that happened backstage, you know how they say, about getting close to your elephant? My elephant used to put the foot out when I got close enough. Mark found out that a later production woman and I were actually feeding our elephants little carrots. We weren't supposed to be doing that really. And he comes out and he goes, "Hey! Lisa, Liz! You guys are feeding them, aren't you?" And we're like, how do you know? And he says, "Because Baby opens her mouth whenever you walk by." He goes, "What are you feeding them?" We go, we're feeding them little carrots. He goes, "Where did you get them from?" Well we saved them from the dinner in the [inaudible 00:20:46].

[00:20:30]

So the next day he comes out with this big package of baby carrots.

Marissa: Well, Gunther and Mark always said don't feed the elephants when you get up all the time because then they come to expect it. And if you don't have something, they don't want them to grab you and pull on you like, "Hey!" Because I used to give Sara little peppermint round candies, get up there and just lay on her head and reach up under her trunk, and then if I didn't, she'd spit at me. She'd put her trunk up and she'd reach around, because I'd lay down, and she'd go like this, and I wouldn't have anything I'd just pat her trunk and she'd just go tthhhh! Right in my face!

[00:21:00]

[00:21:30]

Lisa: Another funny one is, I did the aerial sphere. It was like a gyroscope, and we had to spin for four minutes up there. I used to drink Dr. Pepper on the first show just to get a buzz so I could ...

Lewis: That's my girl.

Lisa: Saturday morning between opening and spec, I used to down like half a can of Dr. Pepper. But they would blow off the confetti while we were up there, and one day I was up there and a whole bunch of it just hit my face, and I'm going around, I'm up there going pfft! Blowing, and I couldn't get it off! It stayed there, I came down and it's all stuck to my face, it was stuck to the lipstick. Could never get it off. And I asked my friend, I said, "Does that happen to you?" She goes, "Oh yeah, that happens all the time. She said the confetti machine's right in front of my sphere." That's Liz.

[00:22:00]

Lewis: That was planned.

Nancy I've always wondered, as a dancer, dancing on those floors ...

Davies:

[00:22:30]

Lisa: Quarter inch of rubber, and then your two to three inch shoes.

Nancy

That's hard. That is hard.

Davies:

Marissa:

It was, we had a lot of shinsplints, and a lot of times we had to change choreography due to that. But for the most part, circus girls are tough. You know? We can go through anything. You dance around poop all the time. So one of the biggest rules is do not put your shoes on the table in wardrobe. Do not put your shoes on the table. Always wear flip flops or shower shoes at the train, or whatever, because you know you've got crap everywhere.

[00:23:00]

Lisa: We could just, maybe two three feet out, and we could just jump it, not hit it.

Marissa:

It was nice sometimes when we got the boots that were like tennis shoes, or we had the tennis shoes with the pom pom routine, it was like, "Oh my gosh, we've got tennis shoes, we can jump, and we can do cartwheels," and whatever. It was nice.

Lisa:

The later shows got better because we had the track rubber where they had pieces and there were certain sections they would pile floor on. So sometimes people would trip on those. The later shows, they started just putting the ring rubber all the way across, and I really envy that. I tripped once, actually Donna was right behind me. And I tripped going out of the ring, and I was doing this running thing, and I kept getting lower and lower. I never hit the floor. Donna told me later, she goes, "I thought you were gonna face plant," she goes, "I was just waiting for it, I was just waiting to jump over you."

[00:23:30]

Nancy

Leave you behind.

Davies:

Marissa:

Do you remember Lisa Gear?

Lewis:

Gear?

Marissa:

Yes.

Lewis:

Mm-mm (negative).

[00:24:00]

Marissa:

We had, for the children of the rainbow tour, we had gymnastic ribbons. And so you had all these dancers and production women, and we all had them. And we did a whole dance number with them, and then the whole cast came out and we all ran around the track and we're waving these ribbons. Well, somebody's ribbon got caught around her neck, and they're pulling. They thought somebody was holding it, and pulled her, and she fell flat on her face and just laid there. She's in this bright orange costume, and she's laying on front track in front of ring three, just laying not moving, everybody's jumping over here.

[00:24:30] And I stopped, because I was always the one who picked up the dancers that had fallen, in my heels, I pick them up, carry them off the floor, and I was like, "What are you doing?" She said, "I'm just trying to blend in." Because she didn't ... Arnold Schwarzenegger I think was there at the time, he was in the front row. And she goes, "I just want to blend in," I'm like, you're wearing bright orange on a black track. Come on. But it was the funniest thing because she just laid, not moving, "I just don't want anybody to see me, I just want to blend in." I'm like, yeah, everybody's having to jump over you, you're gonna get hurt.

Lisa: Do you remember the wind?

Marissa: Oh gosh.

[00:25:00]

Lisa: Do you remember? It was one of my first weeks on the show. Remember I fell over the ring curb? I used to always step on the ring curb and go in, and that morning I guess I was feeling good, so I guess I decided, "I'll just fly over the ring curb," and I tipped my foot, bam right down. And the other dancer in front, Amy, she just turns around and she looking at me ...

Marissa: It was Amy?

Lisa: Yeah, it was Amy. And she had that look on her face, you know, with her face all squished up. And I go and I get up and I go and I pick it up, I'm like, just go! Just keep fanning it!

[00:25:30]

Marissa: Waving those big banners.

Lisa: I think we were off with the fanning, I'm just like, "Just keep making it work!"

Marissa: All I have to say is that my dancers were great if they fell or some costume mishap happened, because we've had costumes break, you know, you're dancing and all of a sudden the whole strap comes out and you're just hanging out for everybody to see. Or you have instances where your hairpiece falls off in the middle of manage, and Mark Oliver picks it up and waves it at you in the spotlight. Is this yours? Or your boob pad falls out, which has happened to me several times. But yeah, that's the one thing I have to say, even though we did the same show for two years, round and around, we found ways for morale to have fun. Whether it was on stage, offstage, we were talking about it yesterday.

[00:26:00]

[00:26:30] We had a three month long water gun game called assassin with the entire cast. I mean, concessionaires, it was a water gun game, so you had to shoot people with the water guns, and kill the team off so that the final team gets a barbecue. And it was like, it would be at the mall, and you were all paranoid because you were like, someone's gonna shoot me with a water gun. No matter where you went. It couldn't be during show time. But we did it the first year during show time, because I remember shooting Mark Oliver Gable off of my elephant with my mini water gun during manage. He was so

mad.

Nancy Davies: Let's talk about a big question that I hate I have to ask. What did you think when you first heard that Ringling was closing down?

Lewis: I cried.

Lisa: Shocked.

Marissa: [00:27:00] Cried, and then every single place I went, all my friends were like, "Oh, so what do you think?" And my roommate at the time was going, "Don't ask her. We just finally got her to stop crying." Because it's heartbreaking.

Lisa: Everybody. Because it was on CNN. It was national news, everybody knew. So everybody who knew that you worked there asked about it. And it was, it was sad. I mean, our lives changed because we were there.

Marissa: and the fact that the show would come around to your city or your state-

Lisa: You could see your friends.

Marissa: ... At least every other year. And now it's like, oh.

[00:27:30]

Nancy Davies: And what are we missing? We as an audience, now that that is not gonna be there?

Marissa: It kills me now, because you think of all the children now that, I mean they'll be able to see circuses, other circuses, but they're never gonna be able to see Big Bertha, the greatest show on Earth.

Lisa: Nothing will be that big ever again. I look at the tapes of the living carousel tour, because we still have that on video, and you look at that, nothing is ever going to be that big ever again. That beautiful, with costumes like that, with the animals, floats, nothing is ever gonna be that ever again.

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Lewis: It's magic.

Lisa: Yeah, it is magical.

Lewis: It's magic. That's all it is.

Marissa: Every time it was a show I'd walk through the back curtain and I'd get that feeling again, if it's the first time coming out of the portal and seeing everything, I just have to do it every time I visit the show, and now ...

Lisa: When you sit in the audience even, you know, we sit front track, if you're sitting low enough in the seats, when the applause comes, you can kind of put yourself looking how

you used to see the arena, on the other side sometimes.

Lewis: Yeah.

[00:28:30]

Lisa: I love watching, when I'd go to see the show after I left, bringing my friends, because I like watching the reactions of the people around me who have never seen the circus before. The kids, my friends, who are just in fear because the guy's gonna fall off the high wire, you know, beautiful costumes, the girls, the guys, trapeze, animals, everything. Just the awe on their face. And I feel so proud that we were part of that, and we brought that to people. And that's why I love watching it now, and seeing people do that.

[00:29:00]

Lewis: For me, it was hard, I cried. And even, yeah, a big tough pyro guy, no. It's family, friends, my best friend, who I married, you know. The Felds, Kenneth, and Bonnie, Nicole, Alana, the family, to do something that they've done over the years, Urbanfeld, I thank them. I thank Kenneth, because for a man of his stature ranking in society, I guess, so to speak, was very down to earth. You know? And do I hold a grudge that he ... No. He made a decision.

[00:29:30]

Marissa: It's a business.

Lisa: It's a business decision.

Lewis: We understand it. But I thank them, I thank them all for giving me the opportunity to do the things that I did. I was able to bring ... Two guys I set on fire, for their acts, I was always asked for my opinion on special effects and the pilot we had in the show. So that made me feel good to be a part of something. Just a small part, but a part of a bigger whole. But even for me it was hard because she's like, let's go see the show. I'm like no, I can't. I can't do it because it hurts too much for me. Watching the live broadcast, live feed on Facebook, seeing people that we know, but just knowing who everyone was on the last show, it was so hard. So I couldn't deal with it. But it'll live in my memory forever. I've got sawdust for blood. I think somebody said the circus could be like a vampire. She'll suck you dry, but you'll come back for more. And here we are. They've set up something really cool here for everybody for this homecoming.

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Marissa: I hope we do this often because I've seen people that I haven't seen for years. And seen their kids grown up. Right now I just was Sebastian and Alexander and I was like oh my God, they were this big and now they're taller than I am. They're in their thirties, twenties and thirties.

[00:31:00]

Lewis: Roy and Judie Steven's sons are, both of them are bulk like you wouldn't believe, unbelievable. And I know these kids when they were knee high to a toadstool. Last time I saw one of his sons was, he said a cat got out in Dallas. Very small backstage and he was kind of hiding behind the door, the cat was standing over here just trying to get out. So there are stories, but it's just so unbelievable to see how much has changed over this time. And I know I've been with her for almost 20 years, I've known Marissa now for

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almost 21 plus now.

Marissa: Yeah but I'm only in my twenties anyway, so.

Lewis: Yeah, you want to live forever. We also met you, we know you. [inaudible 00:31:52] But it took me a few moments, I was like, "I know her, I know her, I know her, when did we see her? Oh she was part of production." You were part of it.

[00:32:00]

Lisa: But you were there, you were part of our time.

Lewis: So it was a time you meet everybody and you know everybody regardless. And again, thank god for the technology that we have today. The internet, Facebook, Twitter, just even more ways to connect than just the old way of just picking up the phone or even sending letters.

Marissa: We're watching people's children grow up.

Lewis: See what happened to our friends.

Marissa: I always said if I had kids I'd want to have circus kids. Because they're not shy, they speak a million languages, and they learn so much.

Lewis: Oh yeah, I've got so many of them it's ridiculous.

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Marissa: That's another reason I don't have kids too, because I've babysat too many circus kids.

Nancy  
Davies: I would like each of you to give me a word or a phrase to sum up what Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey is.

Lewis: Greatest Show on Earth.

Marissa: Spectacle.

Lisa: Family.

Nancy  
Davies: I think those are three great words. And I will end it there. And thank you so much.

Lewis: May all your days.

[00:33:00]

All: May all your days be circus days.