

THE ELEANOR ROOSEVELT PROGRAM

April 4, 1951

Description: This recording has the interview segment twice. The transcription, which contains the whole show, begins at 22:35. In the opening segment, ER and Elliott Roosevelt respond to a listener's question about the relationship between the mob and corruption in government. In the interview segment, ER's guest is circus owner and former performer George Hamid.

Participants: ER, Elliott Roosevelt, George Hamid

(22:35)

[ER:] How do you do, this is Eleanor Roosevelt. Every Monday through Friday my son Elliott and I have the opportunity to visit with you here in my living room at the Park Sheraton Hotel in New York City. Each day it is our desire to bring interesting guests that we are hopeful you will enjoy meeting. Elliott, will you tell our listeners today's plans?

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Yes I will, thank you, Mother. Today's program is going to be on one of America's favorite fairy tale themes, a real from rags to riches story. And I think the reason we like this theme so much in this country is because it so often isn't a fairy tale at all, it's apt to be perfectly true, as it is with today's guest. He is George A. Hamid, the 1948 Horatio Alger Award Winner, owner of the Atlantic City Steel and million dollar piers, and that's not even the beginning of his activities. Mrs. Roosevelt will introduce George Hamid in a little while, but first we're going to have a discussion about the mail and also have a message from the sponsors who make this recorded program possible.

[Break 23:48-23:56]

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Mother, I have here a letter from a lady in Trenton, New Jersey uh in which she says "For a long while we've heard about the important influence big time gamblers or racketeers of some kind have had in certain government circles. The other day I read that the Senate Crime Investigating Committee says that the two huge crime syndicates operating in this country have caused widespread corruption in federal, state, and local governments, and that there is a shocking evidence of official connivance in behalf of organized crime. It reminds me that not long before Senator [Estes] Kefauver investigations began, I heard someone say, 'If the big time organized crime is not halted in this country, it will be controlling elections and electing the president within twenty five or fifty years.' Do you consider this simply sensational talk, or do you believe that crime syndicates could eventually control politics?"

[ER:] Well, I think it would be quite easy for crime syndicates to control politics, uh but I, if we were acquiescent and allowed them to do so, but I think though the mere fact that they did appoint this investigating committee and that we now are having it all brought out in the open is our safe guard in this country; it's what always happens. We get it out before the people, and in the mere fact of doing it and getting the top people and uh we st-stop the thing from growing.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] What I don't quite understand is that inter-state crime is supposed to be -- uh come under the jurisdiction of the Federal Bureau of Investigation which is our federal police force. Uh why has our FBI uh not brought these people before the bar of justice before? Why should it be a congressional investigative committee?

[ER:] [Coughs] I don't know, unless it is that [ER coughs] they are very well -- they always have very expensive lawyers and they try to keep just within the law in what they do, and um it may well be that it required certain um particular um rules to uh allow them to be brought before uh the public so to speak because that is what a congressional committee does.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, it is my feeling that uh what has happened--

[ER:] Perhaps we should change our laws so as to allow this to be done by the FBI.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] I think that our FBI does plenty in the law but --

[ER:] It might lead to that.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] That we have shackled the FBI and made them uh not large enough, we haven't provided them with enough funds to really get the job done, and its only when a Senate investigating committee comes along with uh two hundred and fifty to five hundred thousand dollar appropriation and is able to spend it on these hearings, that we are able to really go to town. But if the Department of Justice were given the proper funds to enable the FBI to carry out the same investigations that are carried on by the Senate, uh then I think that could have a much more efficient uh curbing of crime

[ER:] Well, I think-I think that's undoubtedly true that I have said several times and for a long while that my own preference instead of carrying on an Un-American activities committee for instance would be giving the money to the FBI and strengthening the FBI, and giving them even any legislation they needed to strengthen what they could do [Elliott Roosevelt: Yes.] And I would [clears throat] uh even try to raise the type of people going into the FBI because sometimes when I've heard of the investigators, uh I have felt that they were not um always -- now this doesn't always hold good -- but they were not always of the caliber to uh find out certain things, and uh I think it's quite possible that uh you might even have to raise in certain cases, the caliber of the people and the pay of those people that you had in the FBI.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Yes. Well, I also feel that uh-uh there should be a great deal more done uh with regard to uh checking in to our own departments of the federal and the state governments, uh in the way of continuous checks to see to it that uh crime, gamblers, racketeers, et cetera, and the people who sell influence do not-not have an opportunity to get going [ER: Yes, I think that's very--] and to corrupt officials in, in the various departments

[ER:] Oh, I think that's undoubtedly true. I think there's a great deal too much of that.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, and the only reason that that could exist over any extended period of time is that there's no funds--there are no funds appropriated at the present time to my knowledge to check into such activities [ER: No]. I do remember at one time that um uh Mr. Ickes, when he was Secretary of the Interior during father's regime in Washington, was very heatedly criticized because he was supposed to have uh instituted a checking system on all of his to--right from his undersecretaries and assistant secretaries on down to the stenographers.

[ER:] Well, I do remember that. I remember great indignation because he would drop in at odd hours in the cafeteria and discover who left their offices and went for a cup of coffee [ER laughs] [Elliott: I--] and there was a great deal of criticism involved in that.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] I think one of the funniest stories on that uh-uh as I remember it one day he uh came storming into the cafeteria in the Interior Building and saw the place just filled with people having uh a

snack and having a cup of coffee, and so he ordered the cafeteria closed and to and s-and ordered everybody to be fired who was in there. And then he discovered that these were the people who had just gone off of their shift and were getting ready to go home. [ER and Elliott Roosevelt laugh]. But uh I do feel uh also that there is -- uh that there should be uh a great deal more done in the- in the local government level to uh expose uh in the various states and at least enable it to be published when a man is uh cooperating with these racketeers. For instance, I read that not long ago a report of testimony before the Senate Crime Investigating Committee uh when uh they took a report by a sheriff from Louisiana, and uh uh he testified openly that he had allowed the [Frank] Costello uh group to come in and open a notorious gambling place in his community and uh that he saw nothing wrong in it; that if people wanted to gamble they were going to gamble period. Uh and then it came out that he had made hundreds of thousands of dollars in gambling bets and he made a great point of stating that he had paid his federal income tax on those, on those earnings. Now I think that uh at least the people uh in that parish in Louisiana, which corresponds to a county in other states, uh, should have been appraised -- [ER: Appraised.] appraised of uh, just exactly what this man was doing, if -- even if they couldn't reach him through the law uh through the federal law, it should be made available to all the daily newspapers and the radio stations to give the information out concerning this man.

[ER:] Well, I suppose it should; there's no doubt about that. I-I'm afraid that human nature being what it is, it's awfully hard always to control uh what people want to do. If they want to do it they find ways of doing it as we learned in Prohibition and various other times. But I do think you could remove as much reason and temptation as possible.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, I have one more question in connection with this uh-uh particular subject. Where does influence begin and where does it end? Uh we read about the people who sell their influence with government departments and then we read also a little further along that the senators and congressmen write letters and urge upon organizations like the RFC in behalf of individuals that uh their loans should be approved [ER: Well--]. What is influence?

[ER:] Well, I-I think it's entirely proper [ER coughs] for anyone, whether they are an official or unofficial to draw the attention of a government official or a government body to something that comes to them because it may be a good thing, they may believe it is a good thing and should be done. But I think the point is that the government body should never feel that they are obligated to do something that they don't think is right after investigation. And I think that's where the harm comes. That from certain people like senators and congressmen and officials of the government, um without examining or taking any personal responsibility, they put the requests through because they say um we can't go against the desires of so and so, we'll get reprisals in the next um uh appropriation or whatever it may be. When, as a matter of fact, it should be thoroughly understood that you are legitimately doing your job in passing something along, but it is the responsibility of the agency to make the decision.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] I see. All right, I think that answers our question for today, and now I see that our announcer wants to break in for a few minutes.

[Break 35:01-35:12]

[ER:] No matter what our age, the circus always has been and always will be a source of enjoyment and delight, but the stories behind the gay spectacles are often heart breaking, rather than gay. My guest today has had one of the most stirring examples of what a circus life means. He is the author of the very recently published book entitled *Just Circus*. I am happy to introduce to you Mr. George A. Hamid

[George Hamid:] I am very happy to be here with you Mrs. Roosevelt and very delighted to be one of your guests.

[ER:] Thank you. Now the first chapter of your book, Mr. Hamid, bears the title “Allez-Oop”. What does this expression mean in circus life?

[George Hamid:] Well, in circus life it means that uh you’re really prepared to do a certain difficult acrobatic trick and when the cue is given to you it’s “allez-oop” and if you don’t it’s too bad.

[ER:] I see [ER laughing]. Well, that’s um interesting to know how that, what that really means.

[George Hamid:] All the circus people know that term.

[ER:] They all know that term?

[George Hamid:] Oh mostly, no matter what they do, they know what allez-oop means.

[ER:] I see. Well, as everyone’s story begins with being born, where were you born?

[George Hamid:] I was born in a little country known as uh Lebanon, now the Republic of Mount Lebanon. That’s near Syria in the Near East.

[ER:] I know where it is very well because in the United Nations you have very distinguished representative called Dr. Charles Malik.

[George Hamid:] Yes, he is a very delightful gentleman.

[ER:] Well, he has a great deal of influence though the country is small that he represents. What was your early life like there?

[George Hamid:] Well, I was uh born there as many of those poor devils who are Christians in that part of the world uh came into uh being by poor parents, peasants, and uh about six years of age you generally have to go out and do the best you can for yourself, and that was my lot in life. I started as an acrobat, in fact, most everyone who was born over there has to be more or less of a gymnast and uh some are good and some are bad, and I think I was one of the little good ones.

[ER:] Well, I remember, uh Mr. Hamid, of your account of the worst punishment in the book you say, worst beating you ever received from your father. Would you tell our listeners about that?

[George Hamid:] Well, it’s a very long story but I’ll try and make it brief, it was very interesting. As a little student I went to school for three weeks, uh when I decided I was coming to America, well I wanted to acquire a little education, uh which very few had in those days.

[ER:] In three weeks?

[George Hamid:] Well, I thought I could anyway, I was trying and the priest in this little Christian church sent me down to the old well in this village, they had no running water, they just merely went out there with a little clay jars, and I was a fast runner uh the priest thought I was and I ran down and I wanted to keep my record of bringing a nice fresh drink of water to him. And as I got to the well there was a Mohammedan girl with two donkeys and four large jars, two on each donkey. And of course she beat me to the well just by a hair, [George Hamid laughs] as you say here, and she had to fill these big jars, and this little well was just merely dripping dripping. In time it would take about two hours to fill four jars. Well, one word led to another, she called me a dirty Christian, I called her something else. In those days

we were children, uh ignorant of the wonderful things we've learned since. Well, we started a fight and being uh an athlete I got little the best of her and I wanted to bury her alive and I almost did. And when I left and came back to the school with this jug of water for the priest, I said nothing about what happened and only I told him I was detained. About an hour later the Mohammedans, the parents of this girl, came to the school and demanded my scalp. Well, the priest tried to intercede but he couldn't do it so my father heard of the incident, and wisely he came up to the leader of the Mohammedans and he says, "Now look, my boy committed this terrible thing," and he said, "and it's up to me to punish him. You stand here and I'll do the rest". Well, he did. He did a very good job, uh but my life was just barely saved, but if he hadn't done that why the Mohammedans might have had me out and I'd have been lynched anyway but my father beat the life out of me but saved my life.

[ER]: [laughs] Well, I see, well I think that was a rather hard alternative though it was a--

[George Hamid:] I don't believe he had a choice

[ER]: He didn't have any choice

[George Hamid:] Either turn me over to the wolves or do the best he could. [39:48]

[ER]: Well, that was uh-- that's a curious commentary really, but I suppose it was the only thing to do. Well now, where did you start your circus career? In Lebanon?

[George Hamid:] Well, I started in Lebanon, uh to begin with uh in a bazaar. There circuses and carnivals and bazaar are almost alike. Uh they used to have uh and do still uh since the biblical days a bazaar in the autumn of in each village, and they produce all the things they manufacture and they grow just like the county fairs and state fairs like we have at the New Jersey State fair in Trenton each fall. They come together to barter and bargain for whatever they produce and each uh group have a group of tumblers or acrobats or sword fighters or sword swallows or hoochie-coochie dancers, as we call them here, and uh that's the kind of uh entertainment that they uh had there and still have, and I was with a little circus that played these fairs. There was a group of seven of us boys that started their little tumbling act and passed a hat around, and at the end of the day we get a little food from the man we exhibited for and we had a wonderful time.

[ER]: [laughs] You liked your work evidently?

[George Hamid:] Well, I- I loved it because you were producing something and you were watching these fairs, and these exhibits. It was really thrilling.

[ER]: Well why and when did you come to the United States?

[George Hamid:] Well, I had an uncle who was uh, performing with the Buffalo Bill Show a few years before I was even born, and we heard a great deal about the Buffalo Bill Show, and it was the ambition of all parents to raise a boy or someone they could send to this wonderful country of America, and so it occurred to my father that it was a grand opportunity to --

[ER]: Did you come alone?

[George Hamid:] Uh no, uh-uh Mrs. Roosevelt, we were working in a bazaar and a scout for the Buffalo Bill Show was touring the world to look for talent as they did in those days, and he happened in this little village when I was working. And he saw the seven boys doing this little act and he picked three of the seven, and I was one of the three fortunate ones.

[ER]: Oh, that's interesting, so the three of you came together?

[George Hamid:] Yes, uh we left uh Beirut and uh Lebanon, which was then dominated by Turkey, uh governed by Turkey rather, and uh we came to Marseille, France.

[ER]: Um what kind of a trip did you have on the boats? Boats couldn't have been very good in those days.

[George Hamid:] Well no, it was very exciting because I uh acquired fifty cents in Lebanese money in those days and I bought a lot of sweets, and Beirut was my first visit down to the big city. When I got on that boat I wasn't very comfortable I can tell you that right now.

[ER]: And so you, you had a rather unfortunate experience to start with?

[George Hamid:] I did, I came to Alexandria, Egypt, that was the first port of call, and Alexandria being the biggest city in that part of the world in that time, we were all looking forward to getting into Alexander, and I had another fifty cents hidden away that my grandmother gave me. When I got off of the boat, the great big Arabian fella came over and welcomed me to Egypt. And I smiled, he asked if I had any money, I showed him the fifty cents, he took it away from me, and slapped me in the face, and chased me back on the boat.

[ER]: Oh, well that was an experience that must have been hard to take in your first big city. (43:02)

[George Hamid:] It was very hard to take but there was nothing I could do. He was a big strapping fellow, I was a little bit of a boy and no one around.

[ER]: Oh dear, well then you said you went to Marseille?

[George Hamid:] Marseille, France, is was the first port where we were uh to meet our uh great admirer, and that is uh Colonel [Buffalo Bill] Cody, that is the man we admired, and waited and wanted to see, Buffalo Bill.

[ER]: Oh yes, well you met him there?

[George Hamid:] Uh well, we did after a little bad experience there. We were taken into a little hotel there and left on our own. We could speak Arabic but we couldn't speak French, and we didn't know how to contact anyone, and the circus was quite a ways out, but uh the parade was scheduled to come down the street and we get out when the crowd was coming by. And when we saw the Arabian troupe heading by this little hotel where we were, why we felt like we were home and we followed them to the circus grounds where Buffalo Bill was showing, and that was our first introduction to the Buffalo Bill Show.

[ER]: I see, well now, tell me a little bit about who um who looked after you in Marseille, and how long were you there?

[George Hamid:] Uh we were about three days in the hotel before we finally caught up with the show, and then when we get over to the show --

[ER]: Did you get any food?

[George Hamid:] Uh yes, we-we uh got some voluntarily and some otherwise.

[ER]: [laughing] My goodness, what an experience for you kids. Now how old were you at that time?

[George Hamid:] I believe I was around ten.

[ER]: Around ten? (44:23)

[George Hamid:] Yeah, at that time I wasn't particular about age and nobody else was, you just grew like topsy, but uh I must have been just about ten.

[ER]: And um so then what did you find once you met um uh Buffalo Bill, who-who looked after you from that time on?

[George Hamid:] Well, somehow or other there was an affectionate feeling that was struck immediately when I met Colonel Cody Buffalo Bill. He somehow or another he took a liking to me and uh I adored him, and then I met Annie Oakley, who was the feature of the show, the most loveable person I have ever met because uh she somehow took me under her wings, in fact, she taught me my ABCs.

[ER]: Did she really?

[George Hamid:] I was very anxious to learn and she could see that, and uh-uh my uncle who was in charge of the act naturally took over and he had uh other people in the act who were assisting him and that ordeal is too long to relate because in those days the kids were just merely used for what we call uh tryouts. Anything that was impossible for the grown-ups to do, they tried out on the little ones. So my being very willing and ambitious, they tried out a lot of things on me [George Hamid laughs].

[ER]: My goodness, did you have, weren't you ever hurt?

[George Hamid:] Oh yes, uh in the uh circus business you have to sustain a certain amount of injuries before you can learn or be accomplished in any uh successful measure.

[ER]: My, that sounds like a terrible ordeal to go through. Well, did you come directly from Marseille to the United States?

[George Hamid:] Well, first we toured the continent, we -- I don't recall all of the cities, but I know that uh-uh Budapest was one and Vienna was another, uh Berlin and most of the large uh cities of France. Uh, that was the season of nineteen six, we left and uh sailed for the United States. I came here in the early part of 1907.

[ER]: You got here the early part of 1907? Did it give you any thrill as you came into the harbor? Where did you come in?

[George Hamid:] Well the biggest thrill of my life uh was uh when we approached the harbor of New York. But before doing that I also had another very sad experience. Uh the three of us landed at Marseille or at least the whole gang did but the exam in your eyes or something in those days and they give you a blue ribbon if you're ok and a yellow one if you are not, if you were to be quarantined. I don't know the difference, but they took one of my favorite friends on the Buffalo Bill Show and he had a yellow badge, and I insisted on following him while I had a blue one. But I herded myself in with the other, and they shut the gate and I was there with a blue badge in a yellow quarantine section. So meantime the other folks left Ellis Island, and they took me out of the quarantine uh gang and they all began to speak to me and there was no one I could speak to, I was rambling only in Arabic and no one could speak Arabian. So

they finally brought an- an interpreter, he explained to me that I was in the wrong pen, I was ok and I could go to New York. Well, I don't know where to go, never having been in New York, not even knowing the address of anybody in New York. I uh said what'll I do? I started crying and he put me on the boat and we came across, and of course I was bewildered at the site of the old Singer building, I thought it was the biggest thing the world has ever known. And I still go down to the Battery just to look at the old Singer building, it was so magnificent and it still is. Well, when I got across there was someone waiting for me and uh my introduction to the old battery I went into the aquarium, right off of the bat I'd heard about that over in Lebanon. I saw that and from then on it was a very up and down sort of an experience trying to become a proficient performer in this country and competing with the greats.

[ER]: But you did - you did find your friends?

[George Hamid:] Oh yes, after I got back into New York they were waiting for me.

[ER]: Well, that's fine, and now I'm afraid we have to stop for just a minute and let our announcer have a word to say.

[Break 48:18-48:22]

[ER]: And now we come back to our talk with Mr. George A. Hamid about his book *Circus*, which really is to talk about his life, and um so I'm going skip a few years, Mr. Hamid, uh I'm-- you just said they were hard years for you but uh you did learn to be an efficient performer? Now did you go on with the tumbling act?

[George Hamid:] I-I did. In those days the circuses were about the biggest things in this country. For example, they used to have three or four big circuses open each spring here in New York City, some under canvas, some in the old garden. That where I made my debut, at the old Madison Square Garden back in 1907. Well, uh being ambitious I was out practicing every day morning, noon, and night and in those days with the circuses you had to do everything. We used to meet ourselves coming back, in one scene I'd been a stage coach uh fighting the Indians and the next scene I'd be an Indian fighting the cowboys and in one scene would be a United States cavalry men and the other scene you'd be something else, but our principle job was as tumblers and pyramid builders in an Arabian troupe, but we had to fill in on most all other capacities as the circus director uh desired. So you were kept pretty busy trying to learn everything about circuses and circus life and being efficient in your performance.

[ER]: Well, did you stay with Buffalo Bill Circus?

[George Hamid:] I stayed with the Buffalo Bill Circus from 1907 until 1913 when the circus broke up in Denver, Colorado when all hearts were broken, particularly mine, because I lost my beloved hero a-and that the show was broken up. And uh he was a great character and to see him broken down and the performers having to leave and disband after all those years, it was a heart breaking sight. But there's nothing else to do just like the good progress of Americans I walked from Chicago, I mean from Denver, Colorado, to Chicago, Illinois. [50:19]

[ER]: You walked?

[George Hamid:] We walked

[ER]: That's quite a little walk [ER laughs].

[George Hamid:] It's not little, Mrs. Roosevelt, it's a-it's quite a walk, I can assure you. But being young and ambition uh and trying to get some place and not being of the caliber that would say, "I give up", we walked and we hitchhiked and we had a marvelous time. And we finally reached Chicago and reorganized and that's the way it was in show business and circus business in those days, you were down one day and up the next and hardships or nothing mattered and to succeed you had to expect all of those things, as you do in all businesses in this great country of ours.

[ER]: Well, I'd like to know as you had the experience, how you felt that American circuses compared with the European because, of course, today you'll find European circuses uh- all over Eur-- all over.

[George Hamid:] Yea, wherever you go. Uh here's-here's the difference about the European circuses and the American circuses. Over in Europe, it seems to be a tradition, if you're a wire walker, the family uh-uh continues that tradition for years and years and years. When you get old you sit back and try to invent new tricks for the youngsters. If you're a - a horse trainer, and uh that's the same thing, always passing on your ability and your experience to your children and their children, and uh each generation tries to improve on the work of the previous generation. Here we're a little faster. For example, in Europe they feature a one-ring circus, they put on one act at a time. Now the average circus in this country, they must have at least three displays at the one time. Uh you take the --

[ER]: I find it very distracting.

[George Hamid:] Well, I agree with you, only the people expect it, it's the American way of presenting mass production. The Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey Circus uh are never satisfied with less than eight or nine displays on at the same time. I have my own circus, the famous Hamid Morton Circus, one of the biggest in the country. We performed for Shrine auspices, crippled children hospital; her wonderful husband gave us an okay during the war to continue our circus because our circus was exclusively for crippled children's hospitals. We raised millions of dollars in that way. Well now, our circus uh is twice as big as any European circus you'll find anywheres, but the Hamid Morton Circus is operated as a European type show, featuring individual displays rather than mass production. So if you like a European circus, then you'll like individual displays, if you want mass production, it's a la Americana.

[ER]: I see. Well did you find it -- always find it easy to get engagements? [52:56]

[George Hamid:] Not always; in fact, it was quite difficult in the olden days because we had a lot of competition. Its much easier now believe it or not, even though there are no vaudeville to speak of or the market we had in those days. Uh-uh yet it is easier because you have a variety of ways of making a living. You have the television, which has become a wonderful thing for novelty acts, you have cabarets, you have hotels, you have uh uh resorts, you have amusement] parks, you have county and state fairs that are the finest in the world here in this country, so there's a great market for a circus acts, no matter where you go here in this country of ours.

[ER]: Now did you perform in your own circus?

[George Hamid:] Oh yes, I certainly did

[ER]: You did?

[George Hamid:] That was my ambition in life, just to do the best act that anybody, everyone -- anyone ever did in my particular line: that is tumbling and pyramid building.

[ER]: But just what year did you begin your own circus?

[George Hamid:] I took on my own circus in nineteen hundred and seventeen.

[ER]: And have you gone on ever since?

[George Hamid:] Uh no that circus met a very sad fate within six weeks, we were broke, but uh that was again -- I was down and came up again, and that's the way it's been. Right now, our present circus, the Hamid Morton Circus, has been uh operating for twelve consecutive years.

[ER]: That's a long time.

[George Hamid:] It's a pretty good record yes

[ER]: That's a very good record. Well, is it a -- it's a, it's a pretty big circus?

[George Hamid:] It's one of the biggest in the country. We feature the greatest acts in the world. There's only one place that has bigger acts. You see, when we speak of an individual act, Mrs. Roosevelt, the features and the outstanding thrills are few and far between. The ring men enters the port possibly about five or six of those type of acts a year after searching in the world for those type of acts you see in all the circuses. The only other place that does that is the famous Steel Pier in Atlantic City. The Steel Pier in Atlantic City has a motto "No act is too expensive or too unusual for the Steel Pier to present." So that when we tried to uh-uh-uh bring in those types of acts, we have to have a lot of financing. We have to get people who are unusual, who are daring, and that is what has made the circus a living symbol in this country because they know they get clean, wholesome, entertaining exhibitions of the best that there is to be had, particularly with the more reliable circuses. So that way, you have to search the world always to bring in new novelties and new innovations in this country to qualify with the wonderful circus acts we now have in America.

[ER]: Well, I think your book gives one, a very good picture of the uh life of the circus. Now I wonder if you'd be willing to tell our listeners the story of Jim the Golden Bear which I thought was salacious?

[George Hamid:] You see in the circus business when you are a circus owner, you have your hobbies and your pets. In this particular circus that I took on in 1917, I fell in love with a bear of all things, but he was a wonderful pet. One of the nicest fellas I ever met. He was big, he was grizzly looking, and he was a wrestling bear, and we had a great big wrestler that used to go in the ring and wrestle actually with this bear, and this bear, I think, knew that he had a challenge, and he really wrestled and fought and did the best he could and he usually won. Well now, I didn't wrestle with him myself, but I liked him, in fact, I loved that old bear, and I used to feed him uh bread and uh carrots and various things that he enjoyed. And uh one day I rented this bear out for a feed to a competitor of mine, and sadly he neglected this bear, and finally I was called in by the humane society uh weeks later to come out and rescue this bear. He was in a cage abandoned on the ground in McKeesport, Pennsylvania. I went out there and got in there just in time to have this poor bear die in my arms while I was feeding him uh milk, trying to revive him.

[ER]: Oh, that's a sad story.

[George Hamid:] It was very sad.

[ER]: And I'm very sorry that we have to stop on the sad story because there are lots of that are not sad, but unfortunately our time has come to an end, so I'll just suggest that everyone gets the book to read all the stories because there are many they will be very much amused by, and thank you so much for being with us.

[George Hamid:] Thank you very much, Mrs. Roosevelt.

[Break 57:15 – 57:46]

[Elliott Roosevelt:] This is uh a civil defense message for you, intended to give you instruction on what to do in case of a-an air raid in your area. Protect yourself. Follow ten civil defense commandments. One, go to a basement or shelter if you hear a siren. Two, in a sneak attack, lie under a bed, table, or desk. Three, if caught outdoors during a sneak attack, fall near the curb facedown. Four, cover the exposed parts of your body. Five, if you are not shelter close your eyes. Six, keep away from windows. Seven, don't try to reach your school children; teachers are trained to care for them. Eight, don't use your telephone. Nine, after an attack if you are in the blast area, take off your clothes a bathe with strong soap. Ten, don't use food or water exposed to radiation.

And now it's time to close the program, and to remind you that you've been listening to the *Eleanor Roosevelt Program*, which comes to you each Monday through Friday at this same time. And this is Elliott Roosevelt speaking and wishing you all good day.

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