



Physician Assistant History Society

Honoring our History; Ensuring our Future

Jerome Bredouw-4/30/2003

(00:00:00)

Carter: This is a history interview conducted by telephone on April 30, 2003, with Jerry Bredouw B R E D O U W, Edmonds, Washington. Mr. Bredouw wrote a script for a TV series called *The Bold Ones* titled "Angry Man." The script and episode played an important role in alerting the American public to the plight of ex-military corpsmen and the possibilities with the PA concept. Mr. Bredouw also introduced Dick Moores the cartoonist to the PA concept, which eventually led to Chipper Wallet, a character in the cartoon becoming a PA. This is Reginald Carter and again the date is Wednesday, April 30, 2003. Ok, what I like to do is just get a little background about you. Where did you grow up?

Bredouw: Kansas City.

Carter: Large family?

Bredouw: No, only child.

Carter: Only child, uh huh.

Bredouw: Divorced parents.

Carter: What did your parents do?

Bredouw: Well, nothing of note. That is a long story; let's just say nothing worth mentioning.

Carter: Oh, ok. Did you...after high school did you go to college or did you go out into the work world?

Bredouw: I was a trumpet player.

Carter: A trumpet player.

Bredouw: Yep, and I had no time for college and I could not have cut college anyways, mentally I just did not have the chops. But the trumpet playing chops I had. (Laughter from Carter). So I went out in the dance band.

Carter: Ok, and this was in the 19...

Bredouw: It was from '36 to '40. I enlisted in the last Calvary regiment in the country in 1940, went into active duty in October 23rd 1940 in a band and 127 fied... I don't know how much detail you want.

Carter: No, that's fine. The more I have...like I say this is going to be part of oral history archives so people will be very interested in your background.

Bredouw: Ok.

Carter: So, you were in the Second World War in the Calvary. Did you end up overseas?

Bredouw: Well, the Calvary lasted about 30 days then suddenly they phased it out and it became a field artillery unit. Then I was a trumpet player for a couple years. Then I went to Warrant Officer Bandmaster school and became a bandleader in the Air Force and was discharged in '45.

Carter: In '45, ok, and was there any particular occasions that you all played for? You remember?

Bredouw: Yeah, I conducted for Bing Crosby at the Hollywood Cantin. (Laughter from Bredouw and Carter)

Carter: Was that where you got to Hollywood?

Bredouw: Yeah, that was the first time.

Carter: Yeah.

Bredouw: Yeah.

Carter: After service, what did you do?

Bredouw: Well, I tried to stay in the music business but I was not really up to the competition in Los Angeles, which had probably the finest musicians in the country.

Carter: So eventually I married a girl whose father went to Fresno, California, had a job. I found myself in Fresno and worked at the *Fresno Bee* newspaper for ten years selling space and also playing trumpet. And some of my friends and neighbors were doctors. I always had an interest in medicine. Thought I might want to be a surgeon as a kid until my dad arranged for some of the kids in our group to go through the stockyards in Kansas City which were a big operation. After having seen hogs slaughtered, the sheep and then the cattle and smelled the blood, I think I smelled that blood for the next 20 years. That was it for medicine. I was not going to be a surgeon after that.

Carter: How and when did you get to Los Angeles and Hollywood?

Bredouw: Out of Fresno I went up to San Francisco and was hired by Young and Rubicam Advertising as a writer. A couple of years later, late '59, I was sent down to LA to do some promos for a show called *Hong Kong*, which Henry Kaiser had bought to replace *Maverick*. Some of the promos that I did for Hong Kong, attracted attention, and got me an offer from ABC to go back to New York and run their owner of promotion department.

Carter: Ok, while you were in Hollywood, let's go back and pick up your growing interest about the plight of paramedics or military corpsmen who were serving in paramedical roles. Do you recall when this and how this came to your attention?

Bredouw: Oh, boy. Let me think a minute.

Carter: There was a case in Northern California. Do you remember if that was something you had read? There was an article in *Time* magazine about that?

Bredouw: I doubt if that would have turned me on to the problem but it is certainly on the subject. There was a doctor who needed another pair of hands. When he found a pair of hands that he could use, the nurses, who did not like the idea of this Physician's Assistant concept was another pair of hands; that they had been doing very ably and illegally giving shots and stuff for years. They rose up and said to hell with this and that is why a lot of big, burly men these days are called nurse because that is what happened.

Carter: Yeah.

Bredouw: I can't think what turned me on to this. No, probably if I sat down and scoured my head I might be able to but not right now.

Carter: But anyhow it came to your attention one way or another and you became somewhat interested and the fact that you had been in the military, too, I guess kind of whetted your appetite about these corpsmen.

Bredouw: There was a two to three year dissolve here because I went to New York for ABC. First of all, I worked for ABC and Hollywood for three or four years. Then went back to New York in a bigger job in which I failed. Then, 1968 I think, I came back to California just freelancing and that's when the medical thing would have taken hold.

Carter: Right.

Bredouw: In '69 or '70.

Carter: You had said in the letter, correspondence that you had spent a good bit of money and had travelled. You could not come up to the east coast but you have been up to Seattle and talked to Dick Smith up there about what was going on and you had this idea for a script and you were getting background information for it. So, it seems like you really got involved and started doing some research and background on it.

Bredouw: When is the date of the letter? '70?

Carter: Yeah, it is around 1970. It was probably a year before *The Bold Ones*, the episode actually aired. I believe that aired in October of 1970. I believe this was early 1970, late 1969 or early '70.

Bredouw: That sounds right.

Carter: As you got into this and you looked at the plight of these corpsmen...I believe out of this case in northern California there was some legislation action being taken in California to protect these physicians that were using these military corpsmen or paramedics.

Bredouw: At this point, I can't remember if it was to protect the corpsmen or to put more restrictions on the doctors, as to who they could use and what they could do.

Carter: I think that was it. So you think the first attempts were to do more restrictions then later it turned into giving them more protection?

Bredouw: I am not sure about that last part. I just don't remember. But I remember Howe Benny got fired because of the incident. When I caught up with him he was down in Santa Rosa or someplace. Somewhere close to California.

Carter: So tell me how you got into the position to be able to develop a script then for *The Bold Ones*. You said that you had done some freelancing but you were there and you ran into Rory Higgins at the time.

Bredouw: Rory Huggins.

Carter: I mean Huggins.

(00:09:58)

Bredouw: Huggins was the guy that I worked for when I first came to Hollywood at 20th Century Fox. He produced *Hong Kong* and that is where I met him. I kept in touch with him and he then later went to Universal where he was producing *The Bold Ones*.

Carter: Ok.

Bredouw: So I got this idea...*The Bold Ones* at that time I think had three different sections: the legal, medical...Maybe there was just two?

Carter: No, there were three and I think one was like a Attorney General or I mean a District Attorney or something.

Bredouw: That was the legal one; but anyway interestingly enough mine did not go into the medical think. It went into the legal because he got busted. The character got busted for saving a

life. Up in this remote of town where the doctor had died some time earlier with his clinical still sitting there. And the townspeople begged him to become his doctor. He said, “I can’t be a doctor” and in the meantime there was a bad accident. He... this is where my medical research kind of helped. Someplace I stumbled across a sengstaken tube, which is the thing they put in an esophagus to stop esophageal bleeding. I had him fashion one because this guy was bleeding heavily and I had him fashion one of those out of a balloon and blew it up and stuck it in the guy’s esophagus, which stopped the bleeding and saved the guy’s life only temporarily. Later he died and they found this guy guilty of practicing medicine and so they brought him up. The end of the episode was the doctor in a nearby town agreed to take him on as a Physician’s Assistant working in this little town but under this doctor’s complete supervision. This probably in reality would not have been possible but on TV they can get away with anything.

Carter: Right.

Bredouw: So we had a happy ending.

Carter: So, now what was your job at the time you were freelancing and writing this script?

Bredouw: That’s it. I was just freelancing.

Carter: Oh, you were just freelancing?

Bredouw: Uh huh.

Carter: Ok, you had a script idea and you had some stuff done and you had had some background checks then you took it to Rory and he got very interested in it.

Bredouw: He thought that it was a hell of a concept.

Carter: So he helped you with writing a script because you had never written a script at that time, had you?

Bredouw: I had not gotten paid for one, no. (Laughter from Carter and Bredouw)

Carter: Oh, ok.

Bredouw: I had not sold any.

Carter: So, you had given a lot of ideas and had produced some scripts.

Bredouw: I forget what the hell I was doing in ‘69. Let me think about it. I am 83 you know so these senior moments don’t ...

Carter: I know.

Bredouw: ...Help anything. I was doing sales films I did a lot for Starcast and stuff like that. I was pretty good with words. I knew enough about... well, actually I had good film connections because while I was at ABC, I had to hire a lot of film people to do my promos for me.

Carter: Ok.

Bredouw: So I knew my way around the business so if I would go out and sell some company on doing a sales film. I had the tools to bring it off. So that's what I was doing.

Carter: So you were promoting at that point in time and doing some of your freelancing, but you had gotten to know a lot of people through your earlier position at ABC?

Bredouw: Yeah.

Carter: Was that when you were in New York or when you came back to Hollywood?

Bredouw: Hollywood.

Carter: So you knew a number of people. So in your relationships, you eventually ended up in Universal. From 1970-1977 as Director of Broadcast Promotions, that was with Universal or ABC at that time?

Bredouw: Universal.

Carter: And out of that came a job for ABC?

Bredouw: No, the job for ABC came out of 20th Century Fox, where I was in late '59.

Carter: Oh, ok.

Bredouw: And early '60.

Carter: Let me just go back and get this. So in the 50's and 60's you were with Fox?

Bredouw: No. I was just with Fox in '59 and a little bit of '60 for just about a year.

Carter: Then that led into your first job with ABC?

Bredouw: That's right.

Cater: Then...

Bredouw: There is only one ABC job and that was roughly from '60 to '67, '68 maybe.

Carter: Ok, then eventually you went to work for Universal?

Bredouw: Yeah, in '70.

Carter: Then stayed there till about 1977?

Bredouw: Uh huh.

Carter: Then from there where did you go?

Bredouw: Retired.

Carter: You retired in 1977?

Bredouw: Uh huh.

Carter: Oh, ok.

Bredouw: My wife was working at Disney and she was bringing in the paychecks (Laughter from Carter and Bredouw) and so I was able to retire.

Carter: Ok, I think I had it a little bit backwards. After you had left Universal you went to ABC?

Bredouw: No.

Carter: But you went to ABC before this and that is what led up to it?

Bredouw: True.

Carter: Ok. I think in your letter you said you were trying to write another script for another episode and I forget which one it was, but it did not get off the ground.

Bredouw: We came up with a thing called "The Medic Commandos".

Carter: Uh huh.

Bredouw: And these were guys who would be in rural communities, or between these rural communities that went to the accidents by helicopter.

Carter: Uh huh. So flight...

Bredouw: So flying paramedics.

Carter: So you were ahead of the gun there, too. Thinking eventually about what all hospitals have now.

Bredouw: That's right.

Carter: Medivac. Yeah.

Bredouw: Which was especially helpful out there in the desert because if you are 5 hours away from a bleeding artery then forget it.

Carter: Yeah.

Bredouw: But you can get there in 20 minutes by chopper or so. The problem was that the script got made but it was too much along the plot line of the first one, where the guy got in trouble then got out of trouble. By that time Rory was on to other things and could not give me as much help as was needed. So I just could not do as good a job on that one.

Carter: But you did say out of this script about this former corpsman who is basically charged with practicing without a license. A series did originate from that; the idea for emergency, is that correct?

Bredouw: That's right.

Carter: About paramedics. That was based in California?

Bredouw: Yeah, Los Angeles. How about that it was on TV for years.

Carter: It was. I remember that series quite well.

Bredouw: Jack Web produced it.

Carter: Somewhere along '69 you got in touch with Dick Moores, who was the cartoonist for *Gasoline Alley*.

Bredouw: Right.

Carter: Do you recall how you knew Dick Moores or did you just...

Bredouw: I didn't. I just saw that Chipper had been a...

Carter: Corpsman...

Bredouw: Medic. And I thought, hell, this is a good way to publicize about Physician Assistants or paramedics and I wrote him and he did it. And he sent me Christmas cards for a long time after that. He was appreciative.

Carter: I have correspondence from him to Bob Howard and it sounds like you suggested to him to get in touch with Bob and I assume he did that.

Bredouw: I think he must have.

Carter: Bob followed up with that and had him here at Duke a few times. Out of that I have an Intercom, which was a newsletter published here at the medical center, where actually they launched the cartoon. That was dated March of 1971 when the first edition came out about Chip becoming a PA.

Bredouw: Right.

Carter: So, you really are the one. So I always thought Bob Howard just called Dick Moores up and I had not realized that you were the one that had instigated that.

Bredouw: Yeah, it was me and I was... also they were going to drop the strip in the *LA Times* at one point and I had forgotten how we organized, but a bunch of us went down and picketed the building (Laughter from Carter) saying, "Don't drop the strip because we like it."

Carter: Yeah.

Bredouw: Because I grew up on Gasoline Alley, Skeeze is about my age so I felt personal about it.

Carter: Well, it was a brilliant idea and it really did get the idea out to the public very quickly. Any other thoughts about that period of time and your feelings about the PA concept in where it has evolved to today? I am not sure if you have been keeping up with it... there are 50,000 PAs out there in practice today and there is a 133 accredited programs with about ten thousand students. One sociologist says he believes it's probably one of the most innovative thing that happened in American medicine in the last century.

Bredouw: Well, if you look at the bare bones of it, I don't know what the percentage would be. Well, the nurses can sure as hell tell you that a lot of what the doctor does someone else can do. The wisdom to know whether this dosage should be increased or the dosage should be changed to similar medicine, one that will have a different effect than the original one; that has got to be the doctor's problem. So far as the extra pair of hands...as the registered nurses were equipped to point out, it doesn't take a whole separate education to do that. As you say, there are Physician's Assistant programs. I went through EMT training myself at one point down at the Burrows Hospital in LA. I know that between us and the paramedics, we did ours in about a year. The paramedics, hell, were in there for at least a couple of years.

Carter: Right.

Bredouw: I don't know what a Physician Assistants program would be as opposed to a paramedic. The point I'm making is at that point the doctor was god and nobody could do anything except him and that is just not the case realistically.

Carter: That is exactly what came out of this. The fact that there was a lot done that someone with two years of formal training and then you are married to a practice and being supervised by a physician that you could go a long way with that.

Bredouw: Oh, yeah.

Carter: That has proven to be so and has proven to be an economically sound idea, too. So it really has worked out. Did you ever talk with Dick Moores by phone or in person or was it always by correspondence?

Bredouw: I think it must have been correspondence. I don't recall him ever talking to...he might have called one time, but I don't remember.

Carter: How about Bob Howard? Did you ever talk to him by phone or was it ...

Bredouw: Not that I remember. I might have, I just don't remember.

Carter: Ok, all correspondences. How about Dick Smith? You actually went up to MEDEX in Seattle, Washington so you must have met him personally?

Bredouw: I don't even remember the name.

Carter: He was a director up there and one of the letters you wrote indicates that he wasn't really in favor of this episode. He thought it was going to shake up things too much. He was trying to smooth the waters up in Washington and he just did not know how this was going to play out.

Bredouw: You know, now you are beginning to jog my memory. At some point, I went back to Chicago, I think it was, to a convention or I don't know what the hell the convention was. And some young fellow I was talking to says we want to be careful not to polarize people, you know. That was exactly what you are talking about but I don't know if that was in connection with the Seattle visit; but at some point somebody was apprehensive about going too fast on this and getting people turned around where they were against it before they even knew what it was.

Carter: Must have been Dick Smith or some other people in the AMA. I think in one of these letters you said that you had...Oh, in a memo to Howard that you had copied the letter to Dick Moores. You say, "Here is a copy of my latest letter to Dick Moor...I mean Mr. Moores, regarding Gasoline Alley. Also, sent a copy to Bob Root R O O T of the AMA Chicago, their communications guy." So you must have, in your research, been in touch with the AMA about some of these issues?

Bredouw: Must have. As I say, I think this was in Chicago when I was warned but...I remember the word "polarizing."

Carter: So, did you go to Chicago to talk to some folks in the AMA about this?

Bredouw: I think I must have.

Carter: Yeah. You were getting around; you were really educating yourself about all this.

Bredouw: Well, it looked like a major opportunity. But I didn't know what the hell to do about it. I think when this PhD dissertation lady came along. She fell on my neck, by god this was solid gold, you know.

Carter: Well, I am going to look that thesis up.

Bredouw: Well, you gotta to do that.

Carter: Let me just summarize this and see if I have this straight. You grew up in Kansas...

Bredouw: In Missouri.

Carter: In Missouri. You did not go to college. But you ended up in the... You were a trumpeter and got into a band. Enlisted in the army or was drafted?

Bredouw: I enlisted.

Carter: Enlisted there then remained in music in the band. Finally ended up in the Air Force...

Bredouw: Airforce Bandleader.

Carter: ...Bandleader. And then was discharged from the Air force. From there you have to remind me.

Bredouw: I kicked around Hollywood for a couple of years in minor musical jobs.

Carter: Yeah, that's right.

Bredouw: But I saw that that was not for me so when I had a chance to go up to Fresno and get a job, I did.

Carter: Then this led you to the job with ABC.

Bredouw: No, that led me to ten years on the newspaper. Fresno Bee.

Carter: Oh, on the newspaper.

Bredouw: Fresno Bee

Carter: Fresno Bee, okay.

Bredouw: B double E

Carter: B...okay.

Bredouw: As in bumblebee.

Carter: Right. So ten years you were doing that.

Bredouw: From '47 to '57.

Carter: Ok and then...

Bredouw: San Francisco, Young and Rubricam

Carter: Right. Then from there...

Bredouw: In '59 I went down to 20th Century Fox with Rory Huggins. Then about a year later I went to ABC.

Carter: Right.

Bredouw: That was a New York job at first then I convinced them it was a Hollywood job because that was where the stars were. I don't know if this is interesting or not, but I came up with the concept of getting the stars to promote their own shows.

Carter: Oh, yeah?

Bredouw: One time I had Bing Crosby and George Burns and Mickey Rooney and another guy who was playing *No Time for Sergeants*, Sammy Jackson, I think. All four of them in the same screen talking to each other about their show on Monday night on ABC. This required visual graphic sophistication, which did not exist. We did not know if we should go over to Warner Brothers and photograph Bing with a quarter of the lens visible and three quarters blacked out.

Carter: Oh, ok. (Laughter from Carter)

Bredouw: Or there might be a way to do this optically. Then we finally found a way to do this optically. The point was that ABC needed ideas. I did not know enough to know how little I knew. (Laughter from Carter) So I just said, "Hell, why don't we do this?" Then someone would say, "You can't do that," and I would say, "Maybe you can." So we had a wonderful time breaking all kinds of rules and making up new rules at ABC for three or four years there.

Carter: Oh, boy. You were an innovator in a lot of different ways, with the promotions and everything.

Bredouw: I have never been afraid of a new idea.

Carter: Then, eventually you're freelancing and then it got into scriptwriting and successful with this medical corpsmen paramedic idea.

Bredouw: I don't want to fly under false colors. I was never a successful scriptwriter.

Carter: Yeah.

Bredouw: I was led through this thing by Rory Huggins who was my mentor and my good friend. He just died here a few months ago.

Carter: Ok, ok.

Bredouw: Then I went into ABC again as a promo guy.

Carter: Yeah.

Bredouw: That makes the distinction...

Carter: But you did end up in, working then, did you say Fox first?

Bredouw: Fox to ABC then eventually to Universal

Carter: And that is where you retired.

Bredouw: Seven years, '70 to '77.

Carter: Right. And director of broadcast promotions and coming attractions.