



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

In 1927, at the age of sixteen, George W. ("Slim") Lewis left his home in St. Louis, Missouri, to travel, for the next four years, with various American circuses and carnival shows as animal caretaker and concession helper. His first job of any importance was with the Robbins Bros. Circus in 1931 as assistant superintendent of the menagerie. From 1932 to 1933 he was the trainer of the world-famous elephant, Tusko. After Tusko's death at Seattle's Woodland Park Zoo in 1933, he traveled for one season with the Downie Bros. Circus as elephant trainer.

He married Edna Louise Frizelle in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in April, 1935, and then went to work for two years for the Kanaga Ranching Company, of Seattle, raising fur-bearing Karakul sheep on Kanaga Island, Alaska. Then he became head keeper of pachyderms at the Brookfield Zoo, Chicago (1937-42). While here he mated the first rhinoceros ever to produce young in captivity anywhere in the world. Here, also, he was almost killed by the notoriously dangerous elephant, Zigfield.

From October, 1942, until September, 1945, he was overhead crane operator with the Boeing Aircraft Company at Renton, Washington. Here he had a part in assembling the first B-29 ever built. From 1945 to 1948 he operated his own tattoo shop in Seattle, and it was in the latter year that he had his own animal show for the carnival season.

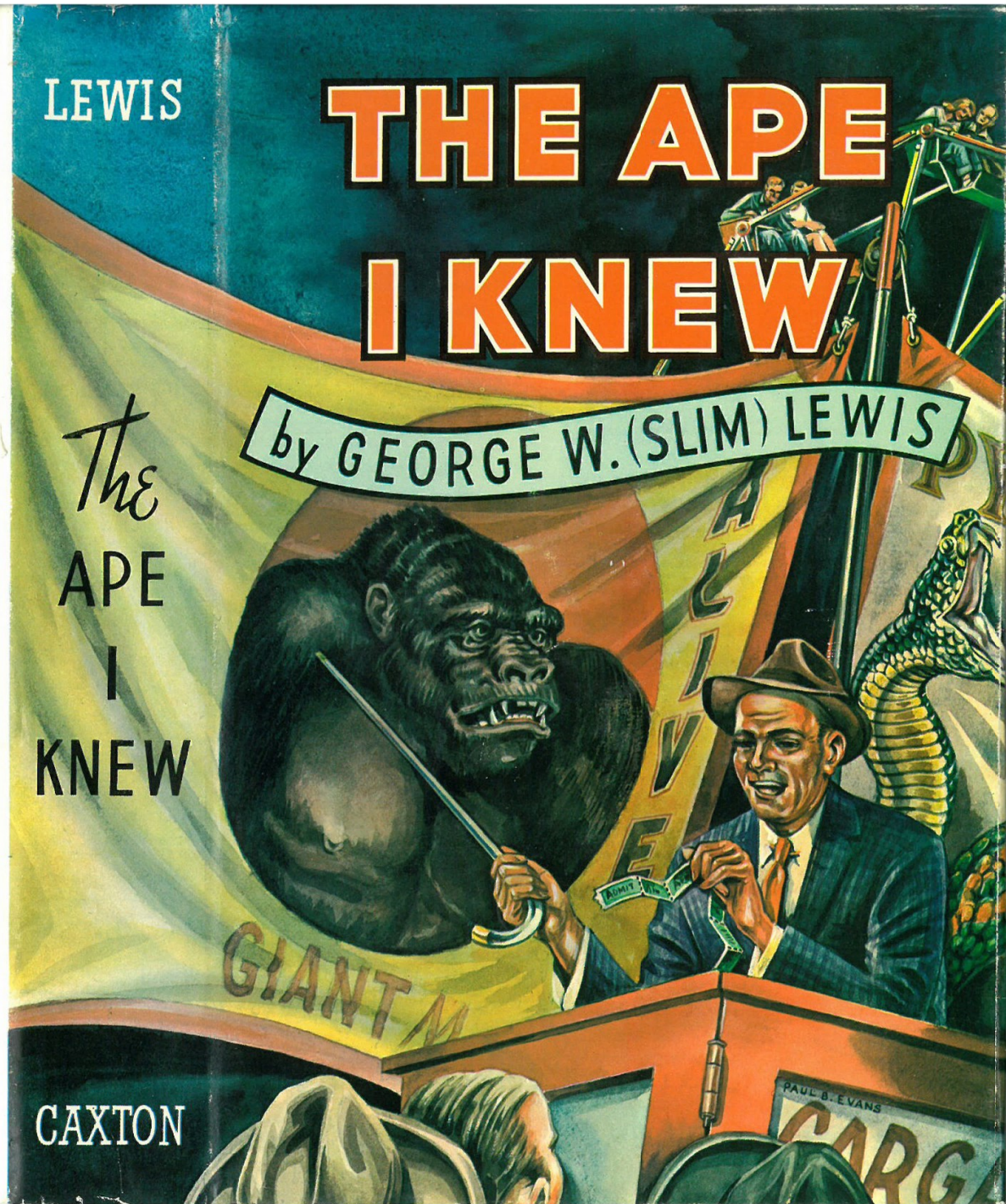
Slim Lewis was animal keeper at the Woodland Park Zoo, Seattle, 1949-53, and he trained elephants and chimpanzees at the Lincoln Park Zoo in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 1953-55. He wrote the book, THE APE I KNEW, in 1955, and he was divorced from Edna Lewis the same year.

From November, 1956, to the present he has been employed as humane officer with the King County Humane Society, Seattle. He was married to Lillian M. Godsey on November 21, 1959.



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George W. ("Slim") Lewis was operating his own tattoo shop at the Penny Arcade in Seattle when he heard, through friends, of a gorilla show for sale — a chimpanzee named Garganga, billed as "The Greatest Living Manlike Ape Alive." Thinking this was a way back into the show business, he became Garganga's new owner and was on hand at Renton, Washington, when the American United Shows opened for the carnival season on April 9.

Living and traveling with a carnival show provided a whole new series of experiences for the Lewis family — Slim, his wife Edna, and their three young sons, Donald, Ronald, and Charles. The first four weeks were extremely discouraging for they were almost continually plagued by rain, and the receipts were poor. At Klamath Falls, Oregon, they enjoyed a pleasant and profitable week, and business held up well when they crossed over the Cascades to Pasco, Washington, and continued eastward across Idaho and Montana.



Later, with other carnival shows, the Lewis collection of animals — now grown to a chimpanzee, two boa constrictors he had acquired, a cinnamon ring-tailed monkey named Little Joe, and some harmless snakes — was exhibited in Iowa, Missouri, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and a corner of Texas before the close of the season in October. After that the family precariously made its way back to Seattle and soon Slim was at the Penny Arcade in the tattoo business once more, waiting for another chance to work with the elephants.

In recalling the experiences of a season with the carnival people, the author of *THE APE I KNEW* gives the reader an inside view of the ups and downs of carnival life. He tells how the locations are assigned along the midway, how the concessions operate, how percentages of the take are divided, and how the games of chance can be rigged.

Except in a few cases, where the author thought it in the best interests of others, the names of shows and persons have not been changed.