

# AN AFTER-DINNER CONVERSATION

## Shackelford Clan Celebrates TV Appearance

By Bob Cosgrove  
Editor

After the bright television lights had been turned off, after the final autographs had been signed, and after the bowling balls had been loaded into the van, Ray Shackelford joined his wife, Sue, his son, Shannon, this reporter and a few close friends for steak dinner to celebrate a week of fine bowling in this year's Fair Lanes Open.

Though he was a little disappointed in losing to eventual champion Art Trask in the opening match of the nationally-televised finals, Ray was obviously very satisfied with his week's performance and confident that there would be more championship round appearances.

After dinner, a few questions were posed and a general conversation ensued. Also seated at the table were Doc Hawley, the manager of Princess Anne Bowling Center who is Ray's sponsor, his wife, Yvonne, Kenny Merryman, a family friend, and Walter Ray Williams, Jr., Ray's roommate on the road. Walter Ray, a national horseshoe-pitching champion, appeared on the television finals of this year's True Value Open where he defeated Tom Baker 269-208, and then lost to Mal Acosta 228-207, to finish third.

**What were you thinking about during the 15-minute break before the final game of match play?**

**RAY:** Well, I was 76 pins up going into the last game and guys were coming around making the incentive offers and yet I still had another game to go! Luckily, I had enough pins left over to make the telecast.

**How did the pressure of the final match game compare to that of the telecast?**

**RAY:** I had to shoot a lot more spares than I wanted to. I tried to protect myself, mainly because I made a lot of spares throughout the entire tournament and didn't win any matches, but I kept the pinfall going—that's how I made the telecast. I didn't really press my spare shots; maybe the strike shots might have been a little pressed.

**Sue, what were your feelings during the final match game?**

**SUE:** I was tense; I was sweating; I had a headache; I was about to cry—I was very tense!

**What did the tournament officials tell you on Friday night after you qualified for the championship round?**

**RAY:** They tell you the different things that you can and can't do on the telecast. (Tournament Director) Harry Golden gives you a ten minute line and then you get a page of do's and don'ts.

**What did Harry Golden say?**

**RAY:** He tells you how many reracks you are allowed, how your appearance should be, certain colors they don't particularly like for you to wear if possible; try to be polite to the sponsor and that if you make the final position where Chris Schenkel interviews you, you always want to try to thank the backer of the tournament.

**Since you qualified fourth, you were allowed to choose which lane you would finish on. How did you come to your decision?**

**RAY:** If it came down to that "must strike" situation, I figured I would give Trask the opportunity to *have* to throw the strike, rather than to put myself in that position.



The Shackelfords—Sue, Ray and Shannon—appear with Yvonne and Doc Hawley after the telecast.

**Was there any consideration of a "favorite lane"?**

**RAY:** No, it seemed to me that the lanes were closely the same. Maybe one hooked just a little more than the other. The main consideration was on who had to throw the strike if one was needed.

**How were you feeling during your match with Art Trask?**

**RAY:** I wasn't really nervous; that might have been the main problem why I didn't bowl good! I changed my shot playing inside and I kinda pulled probably fifty percent of the shots across the lane and when I did, it just hooked.

**Did you have any thoughts about bowling Earl Anthony for the title?**

**RAY:** I had that the minute I made the telecast, but it didn't work out that way. A couple of times I had the lead in the first round of match play, but after about the sixth game Earl started taking the lead and just kept on going.

*(The microphone is handed to Walter Ray Williams, Jr., Ray's traveling mate.)*

**WRW: How did it feel throwing your first shot on national television?**

**RAY:** That was just an accident! As I went to turn the ball loose, the ball just slid right off my hand! *(Ray got a Brooklyn strike.)*

**SUE:** You should have had 9 more accidents; Doc and I liked that one!

**RAY:** I'm not kidding you! I went to come through with the ball and it wasn't there! **Did the lights have an effect on you or your game?**

**RAY:** Not really. The lights are used mainly to reflect towards the background of the area where they're using the cameras. The heat from the lights usually dry up the oil some.

**How much equipment do you carry in your van?**

**RAY:** Probably from 10 to 20 balls—in that area. I have quite a few at home—about 25.

**What's the truth, Sue?**

**SUE:** More like 40!

**How often do you hear from Ray when he's on the road?**

**SUE:** Every other night.

**Even when the news is bad?**

**SUE:** Even when the news is bad! When the news is good, I hear from him after every block. When he was in St. Louis and bowled his 300 games (three of them!) I heard from him after every game!

**Has Ray ever come home when he's out on tour this year?**

**SUE:** I think the longest he was gone was 18 days at a time.

**And he'd come back . . .**

**SUE:** . . . To get his laundry! Laundry is expensive on the road and he hates to do it!

**What is it like not having Ray around the house for long periods of time?**

**SUE:** I guess it's like being in the service. It's not easy.

**Are there things around the house that don't get done? ("Don't ask that!" interjects Ray.)**

**SUE:** Usually, things around the house get done a lot more! We have neighbors and friends and family that are always trying to keep us involved in things.

Shannon's involved in sports and school and work—there's always something to do!

**How is Ray viewed by the bowlers in Fredericksburg?**

**SUE:** I think he's respected. I think he got a lot more respect after he made the finals in last year's Fair Lanes Open.

**Do you think he'll be something of a local hero?**

**SUE:** He's *already* a local hero!

**RAY:** The main point about making this show was the fact that I bought a new camera outfit (video recorder). I explained to her that you had to buy the camera outfit before you could get on television!

*(Unfortunately, Ray was not able to use his own video recorder to obtain a tape of the telecast.)*

**SUE:** It's a wonderful experience to have made it this far. It's just reaching another goal, I think.

**What is your next goal?**

**RAY:** Just continuing to make the telecasts would be my biggest goal. It's not easy each week; it's even hard, especially going through the rabbit squads, making the rabbit and then getting into the tournament. The rabbits are sometimes harder to make than getting a check on the tour.

**Do you think you'll have a different feeling about the rabbit squads should you have to compete in them again? Wouldn't it be somewhat depressing after making the TV finals?**

**RAY:** Well, regardless—you still have to prove yourself through the year. Even if you make one TV show, it doesn't mean that you've made enough points or money to be exempt for the following year.

**SUE:** That's right. Next week he'll be just one of the guys again—one of *the* guys!

**Doc Hawley, what does it mean as a sponsor to have your man make the telecast?**

**DOC:** It's very gratifying to have selected a winner to sponsor.

**How did your sponsorship come about?**

**DOC:** It was a mutual arrangement. Obviously Ray was interested in the pro tour and had the dedication to practice. He came to me and we decided to give it a try. The thing that is really most difficult for me to fathom is how anybody can have the dedication to practice day after day, hour after hour and do all the travelling, in view of the very limited money that's available on the professional bowling tour. That's the thing that's toughest for me to understand. I couldn't do it!

**SUE:** It's a hard life and like I've said several times, this is one of the few victory dinners that you get. You don't get that many—unless you're Earl!

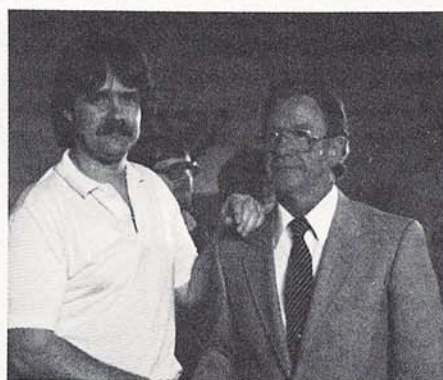
**DOC:** There are a lot of bowlers who say, "I wish I could practice all I wanted to without having to pay for it." and all these things. This would last for about 30 days in my estimation. From then on you wouldn't see them out there.

**How often would you see Ray practicing?**

**DOC:** Everyday—usually for at least 3 hours.

**How does Ray help you with your bowling center?**

**DOC:** He does a lot of ball work for the better bowlers in the center and he works with some of those who have aspirations of becoming better bowlers.



*"My greatest appreciation to Doc Hawley for allowing me the opportunity to compete on the PBA Tour."*

—Ray Shackelford

**Shannon, are you going to sell some of your father's autographs at school?**

**SHANNON:** The people in my class don't know a thing about bowling!

**Are you going to educate them this week?**

**SHANNON:** I'll try to if our teacher will let us talk!

**How do you think that your appearance on the telecast will affect your standing among bowlers in our area?**

**RAY:** I think it will be about the same—some will take it well, some won't. The same thing apparently happened to Steve (Sipe)—some took it and some didn't.

**Do you think there will be any resentment?**

**RAY:** No, I don't believe so. The bowlers around here have improved a lot now. There are a lot better-average bowlers and there are a lot of guys capable of making the telecast—it's just getting the opportunity to do it.

**How does this week's success affect your future decision about becoming a manager in Roanoke, Virginia?**

**RAY:** I don't know. We'll have to deal with that as it comes back again.

**SUE:** But we would rather stay in the area and continue bowling! ■