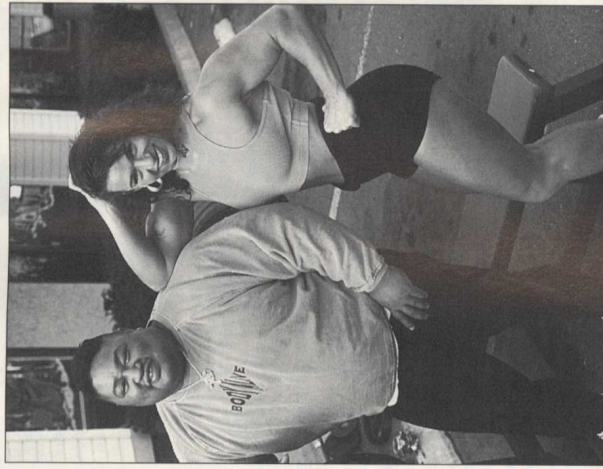


INTERVIEW

Personal dialogue between
PL USA Magazine and the
Sport's Greatest Names.

Anthony Clark Interviewed for Powerlifting USA by Chris Lydon



Anthony Clark and Anna Marie Bezzerides (photo by Ned Low)

CL: Where were you originally from?
AC: My father was in the Air Force. He was stationed in the Philippines when I was born. I lived there until I was 7, then my family returned to the United States. We moved to Houston in 1973, and I've lived here for the last 22 years.

CL: Do you remember what it was like growing up in the Philippines?
AC: Very beautiful, and very hot!

CL: Tell me about your family.
AC: I guess you could say my family is somewhat dysfunctional. My father abused us physically. I still don't have a good relationship with him; it's kind of off-kilter. He and my mother divorced when I was 13 years old. Now that I've made something of myself as a powerlifter, he treats me like a trophy. I'd like to establish a relationship with him where he treats me like a son.

CL: What about the rest of your family?
AC: I've got two brothers and one sister; I'm the oldest. We're pretty close, but we're all still dealing with certain things because of my father.

CL: Does your family encourage you with the powerlifting?
AC: They encourage me to be the best I can be in life, be it powerlifting or anything else for that matter.

CL: What do you do for a living?
AC: Actually, most of my income comes from exhibitions or seminars, but I also distribute and endorse supplements, clothing, and other products. I'm the spokesperson for the Anthony Clark Power Line by Toka Enterprises. I endorse Powerhouse Gym world-wide, and I have to say they're a phenomenal organization and have treated me very well. I'm also working for a company called Super Feet that makes sole beds for footwear companies like Roller Blades. They designed a special sole bed for me that's had a significant impact on my squat. I was wearing a brand new pair of Super Feet inside my ten year old Reeboks when I made the 1100 pound lift at the IPA Seniors. I've also got a contract with Siero-Max, and I endorse The Grip by Broadway Marketing, a liquid which replaces lifting chalk. The stuff works great with out getting all over everything. I

help them find a direction, a focus for their lives. Today's youth has no direction. If you let a kid know that he's worth something, that he is somebody, that he's special, then he says to himself, "OK, I know I can do something with my life, but I've still got to figure out what." Giving kids a purpose keeps them out of trouble.

CL: Tell me about the work you do with kids.
AC: After I graduated from high school, I worked at the Harris County Juvenile Detention Center for five years as a counselor and detention officer. That's how I first got involved with helping kids. Now I give talks and seminars through a bunch of different ministries. My goal is to help kids be the best they can be. I want to help them find a direction, a fo-

matter how hard I tried, no matter how many touchdowns I scored or how fast I ran, nothing made him happy.

CL: Maybe something positive came out of it since it sounds like the situation moved you to become involved with athletics.

AC: That's true. Soon after I started lifting weights, I got involved with sports. I ran track and played football through junior high and high school. I played every position except center and quarterback.

CL: How did you get started in powerlifting?
AC: When I was 14 I entered the Lift for Life Bench Press contest. I pressed 370 pounds and people started to take notice. When I was 17 I competed in the state high school powerlifting meet and totaled 1710. I bench pressed 530, and squatted over 700 pounds in that meet. Then I went to nationals at the age of 19, and benched 612 pounds.

CL: That's quite a debut in the sport! At what point in your lifting career did you start using the reverse grip for bench press?
AC: That's quite a story! It all began with a big mistake. I don't believe that we're born winners or losers; we're born choosers. I chose my first serious relationship badly.

CL: I know you had a lot of family issues when you were growing up. Did you ever get into trouble?
AC: No, I never got into trouble. My trouble was with my father. I tried to commit suicide three times before the age of 14. Unfortunately, I was looking to my father for some kind of unconditional love, but he could never give me that. My mother tried to help, but I needed some sign of approval from my father. No

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protein and then increase my carbs at lunch. I'll eat more protein again later in the day. I always try to eat low index carbs about 30 minutes before I work out. Then I'll have a protein shake about 45 minutes after a workout because that's when protein synthesis occurs. I take in about 8-10,000 calories a day, and try to get 2.2 grams of protein per pound of bodyweight to prevent soreness. I used to think you were supposed to be sore, but now I know better!

CL: Do you recommend any specific supplements?
AC: Siero-Max makes an excellent whey protein. I also use creatine monohydrate, which can be very effective if taken correctly.

CL: How does your training cycle work?
AC: I use a 12 week cycle. I start with high reps, between 20 and 30, for the first three to six weeks to get my body into condition. Then in my power period I drop my reps drastically, first to tens, then eights, then fours, finally triples and doubles. No singles.

CL: How many times a year do you compete?
AC: Usually three, two bench meets, and one full meet. I don't have much of an off-season because I have to stay in shape for exhibitions.

CL: What is your official record now?
AC: I don't know. I train with the conventional grip up to 640 pounds, and then I switch over. CL: What are your plans in light of this new ruling?
AC: My lawyers and I are going after it. I don't think they (the IPF) can make it stick. Somebody has to stand up to them. If we have to, we'll go to court.

CL: Tell me about your workouts.
AC: Until recently I didn't realize just how big a role nutrition and technique both play. To get ready for the IPA Senior Nationals, I went to Wornesford, Pennsylvania, to train with John Schaefer, the current IPA president. He was one of the first guys to bench 600 pounds, and he knows what he is doing. He's got a gym and a restaurant, and he put me on a super regimen. I stayed with him for eight weeks and did nothing but train. It was the first time in my career that I really got to train like a pro. I've got great guys here in Houston, but I can't get totally focused in my home environment. I was like Rocky. I had to go someplace far away to get my head together.

CL: Describe your diet.
AC: I eat about five times a day. In the morning I eat a lot of

CL: I think it was incredibly big of you. I don't think I would have been so generous in your place. Congratulations by the way, for winning that meet despite the lift that was disallowed. With which federations do you compete?
AC: I compete in the IPA, the AIPF, and the USPF. I've done exhibitions for the ADFPA and others. I don't stand for any single federation. I stand for the sport, although I do serve as the vice-

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CL: What do your duties entail?
AC: Mainly, I'm a liaison. I stay in contact with IPA reps around the country. I oversee different projects designed to promote the sport and the athletes.

CL: What advice would you give someone just starting out in powerlifting?
AC: The most important thing to do is to keep an open mind. Don't blindly take anyone's advice. Ultimately, it's you who knows your body best. Research every aspect from diet and technique to equipment and supplements. Know-

CL: What are your long term goals in powerlifting?
AC: We're the strongest sport in the world, and people are attracted to that, but if we want the sport to grow, we need to do things in a first class manner. I'd like to do away with all the petty back-stabbing and gossip and political power struggles. I want to put the fun back in powerlifting. This sport should be about lifters for lifters. I believe the future of powerlifting will see the sport reach new heights, and I intend to help take it there!

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HENRY CHALLENGES CLARK!

Dear Anthony, I just heard about the record you set - 1100 in the squat, 770 in the bench, 730 in the deadlift for a 2600 total. Congratulations. I did about 2340 in the World Drug Free Powerlifting Federation Championships about a month ago myself. Some people have been calling me the strongest man in the world and I know that's also what some people call you. I think it's time to put it to a test. That's why I'm sending this challenge to you and to the major magazines. I think we can build some interest and really help powerlifting.

Anyway, I'm willing to bet \$10,000 that I can outlift you in the total. Naturally, we have to be sure the contest is fair to both of us, so this is how I think we can make it fair.

(1) Because you wear supporting gear in all the lifts and I don't (except for some wraps in the squat), I think we should take two attempts with no gear but a belt and two attempts with gear. For the total, we add our best "gearless" to our best "geared-up" squat, and we do the same in the bench and deadlift, so the final total would be made up of six lifts instead of three. As for what gear whatever they allow, but no more. This should add a lot of interest to the contest, as it will show how much or how little difference the gear makes.

(2) We'd have to work together to pick officials who are known for being fair but firm. I think it would look bad for us to "get away" with high squats or touch and go benches or hitched deadlifts.

(3) I know that when you speak to kids these days, you tell them you don't use steroids. I do the same thing. I think it would set a good example for kids if we could more or less "prove" that we're clean. I'm prepared to be tested at any time without advance warning between now and the contest by a reputable, independent lab and I hope you are, too. I think we can get someone to sponsor the cost of the tests, and if we can't, I'm prepared to pay for my own if you'll pay for yours. I know I'm clean, Anthony, and I hope you are, too. If we can prove it over time it would do a lot to help the image of powerlifting.

(4) We'll have to check around to find a good place to have the meet, and I think we can work together on that. We should be able to find a sponsor or sponsors to help us.

(5) As you know, I'm hoping to represent the United States in weightlifting in the Olympics this summer and I'm in training for that now. I'd like to concentrate on the Olympic lifts between now and July so I can do my best. So, I'm proposing that we try to shoot for a contest date in November or December. This will give us time to build up the publicity and attract sponsors. I also think we should invite any other powerlifters to be in the contest if they'd also agree to the same rules (\$10,000 per man put in escrow before the meet with the winner taking all, a six lift total of geared and non-geared lifts, and thorough drug testing).

How does this sound? I think it could be a big boost for the sport, and bring out the best in both of us. I'm sending this to you privately, but I'm also sending copies of it to the major magazines so we can begin to build publicity and interest. Please call me or write me as soon as you can. For Real, Mark Henry!