

(More Les)

Hawaiian trip (1949). Pudge and Steve Reeves (new Mr. America) were at their tanned very best in brief white "briefs" and they walked down the Santa Monica public beach for a couple of miles (maybe not that long, but close) and Vic Tanny and I were about 50 feet behind (to hear the comments). The "black beach" went bananas "You people are built", "You are the best", "Where you been", "You perfect," etc. (Sorry about the dialect). But they were enthralled! The "white beaches" were enchanted. "My God" was as good as anything! I wish Vic were still alive to elaborate on this little journey. I've never seen him so tittilated with the direct uncontrolled "sexual fantasies" expressed by both sexes. The more aggressive questioning fans, "Who are you?" "Are you actors?" "Will you be here again?"

Remember this was in 1949 - the people became "unglued". Now adays - probably thousands (?) of body builders (men and women) are quietly working out in gyms all over the world who would make Pudge & Steve look like "muscular beginners". But at that moment ~~but~~ the result was almost religious awe "Wow, I've never seen bodies like that" "That is perfection". I don't think many even knew the term "body builders" so we didn't hear that. But like the Supreme Court Justice who couldn't define obscene, but knew it when he saw it, these beach goers didn't know how Pudge & Steve got that way, but they knew perfection when they saw it!

I was always very proud of her, Joe, I knew how hard she worked to perfect her handstands, adagio positions, etc. And the time she spent working out and the total feminity in this female body. I believe it was in Nashville when a couple (after a show, we were still in costume) introduced themselves and the husband turned to his wife and said "You are the same height, this is the way I want you to look" - (This male remark always embarrassed Pudge) the girl's "surprise answer" "But you don't have any masculine muscles". As a matter of fact Pudge's spinal erectors - the long back muscles were deeper than Steve Reeves - Steve didn't want to exercise anything that might make his gluts bigger! Pudge's muscularity was indeed there but her complete feminity easily overcame the wife's fear of masculine muscles - if she followed her husband's persistent urging! I guess she expected to see a masculine female jock!

At the present time we have many completely muscled females who off the stage are as feminine as Cher, because we are exposed to National and International Contests and slick periodicals with outstanding photography to publicize the female athletic cult, the "movement" is popularized and many more women involve themselves. You must remember that in America's "fitness infancy" even weightlifting had few devotees (Bob Hoffman's York Barbell dominated the U.S. Olympic weightlifting) and body building was almost despised (except Grimek, who was really not a body builder - he just grew and lifted weights) - he would only be a candle-holder to the totally developed each and every individual muscle - including steroids - of our top contenders today. We trained for lifting weights overhead standing up, not lying down - doing leg curls, bench presses, concentration curls, etc. In the purist weightlifting circles, developing muscles for their own sake was "pretty boy" stuff. Excuse me, Joe, rather a long winded answer (an old man's privilege) to a simple "what was your feeling" question.