

INTRODUCTION

*"Give me a mountain and nothing to do
Give me the sunshine, give me a Dew
Give me something simple and true
All I need is sunshine and smooth, refreshing Mountain Dew,
yeah!
Give me a river, give me a Dew
Give me my good friends, give me a Dew
Give me the sunshine, give me a Dew!"*

Hitting the airwaves in 1982, the jingle for the television ad featured a young brunette woman scrunching herself into the center of a large, inflated inner tube. Her high school pals look on and encourage her, adorned in tank tops and athletic, outdoorsy shorts that show off their teenage muscles. After a slight push to trigger the downward momentum, slow motion video captures her descending and rotating down a mountainside in Huletts Landing, New York. The crowd of friends runs alongside her, and together they all leap into the shore of Lake George, splashing and laughing before they grab some ice cold, refreshing cans of Mountain Dew soda pop.

As soon as the commercial for one of America's most popular

beverages ended, Rick and Glen looked at each other, their jaws wide open.

“Oh my God, we gotta try that!” said Glen, always on the lookout for new excuses to use his parents’ boat.

For Domenick “Rick” Futia, such an activity fit right up their alley. He and his best friend, Glen Corbus, were regulars at Calero Lake in San Jose, where they engaged in waterskiing, biking, and other high-risk, high-testosterone antics. Both seventeen years old and in peak physical condition, they felt indestructible. Kings of the campus at Pioneer High, they always attracted a crowd of like-minded kids, many of them adoring females. They never followed trends; they set them. Offline influencers in the world before social media.

Rick, full blooded Italian and proud of it, was dead cool. Glen, a former Golden Gloves and Junior Olympic boxing champion, hung right there with him, simply by association. Blessed with movie star looks, Rick easily won John Muir Middle School’s, “Best Looking” award in the pre-#MeToo era that defined the late 1970s. On top of that, his strict workout routine, combined with just about the best genetics a man could possibly ask for, produced a rock hard, muscular physique that inspired awe and envy among any gym he strutted into.

Feathered hair and muscle shirts in tow, they spent the next several days planning their own version of the Mountain Dew commercial. Taking various lifelong friends along for the ride, they raced across Calero Lake and took turns rolling down the hill in an inflatable inner tube they had spotted along the road and claimed as their own. Glen always went down straight and fast. At the end of the hill, a slight edge dropped off, providing the most thrilling part of the ride. The tube would soar into the air, catch some serious hang time, and for the grand finale, crash into the water like a cannonball.

The excitement led to additional trips to the lake for more of the same. The 22nd day of May, however, would be their final trip. A sunny spring day promised another memorable adventure at Calero Lake, one of many they had experienced over the years. Their junior year of high school coming to a close, another summer of fun in the sun awaited them. Rick, in fact, had been training for the Mr. Teenage USA bodybuilding contest that he

stood a legit shot at winning. Just a few months removed from being featured in *Muscle Up* magazine, an impressive accomplishment for a kid still under 18, Rick had eyeballs on him from bodybuilding scouts and pro wrestling promoters. Glen, meanwhile, kept on winning his fights, living up to the hype as the hottest welterweight prospect in Northern California.

On his way out the door, Rick shouted, "Ma, I'm off to the lake!" in Italian. He looked to his right, down the hall, and saw her styling her distinctive beehive hairdo. He paused for a moment, not knowing why, and stared for a few more seconds. Despite the countless women my uncle Rick had dated since elementary school, none of them came close to the admiration he felt for his mother, my beloved Antonietta "Nonna Nina" Futia. It's a visual he never forgot.

Seconds later he climbed inside his 1972 Pontiac Firebird. True to his infamous habit, he'd jump from song to song immediately after the first chorus. From Boston to Foreigner to Bad Company to Van Halen, Rick loved his classic rock, yet lacked the patience to sit through an entire song from start to finish.

A few miles away, Glen loaded up his car too, picking up his girlfriend Helen, and towing the family boat to their usual spot at Calero.

Planning ahead, Rick pulled into a local grocery store to grab some steaks for the grill that Glen always brought. As usual, heads turned whenever Rick walked into any building he entered. Women did their classic double-take, eyes drawn to his bulging biceps, 6'-0" frame, broad shoulders, sparkling bedroom eyes, and comparatively thin legs that nonetheless emphasized a shapely bottom that his tight jeans strategically showed off. Always with a comb sticking out of the back pocket, of course, in true '80s fashion.

Even the men stopped and stared. He portrayed an Italian version of the prototypical Greek God; women wanted to see him, and men wanted to be him. Rick literally had it all.

And he knew it. He rarely bragged about it, but he knew it. Confidence, not arrogance.

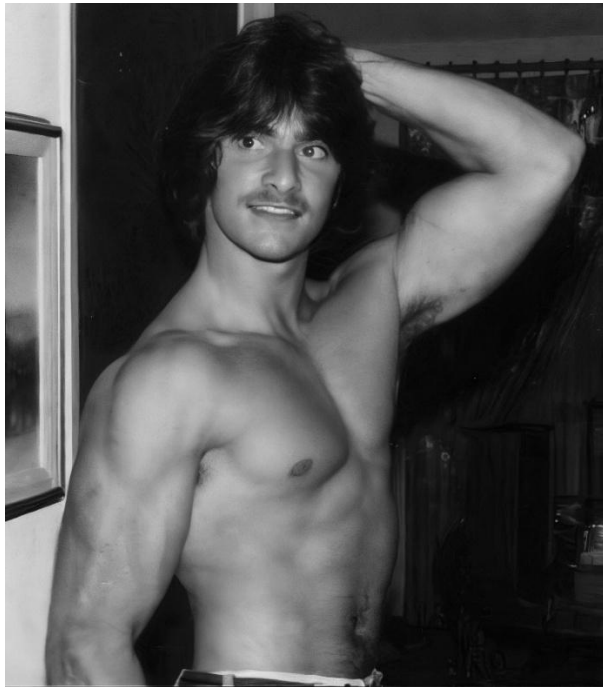
He also sensed something else but couldn't quite place his finger on it. While standing in line to purchase the beef, he looked to his right. He halted in mid-step to fixate on himself, just as his

instant secret admirers in the store had. He saw his reflection in the mirror. Although the running joke held that Rick never met a mirror he didn't like, this time felt... different.

He looked at himself longer than usual. His impeccable body, standing straight up with poise, held up a handsome face and head of hair sculpted for Hollywood. His reflection gazed back at him, like a twin brother already privy to the very truth Rick sensed. Unlike other times, he didn't stare out of pride or self-admiration. His facial expression displayed a suspecting hunch that something didn't quite seem right. Something felt amiss. But what could it be? Only fate, and perhaps his reflection, knew.

The long silence broke when the cashier called his attention. In his momentary gaze of wonder, Rick had stalled the line behind him. He shook it off, apologized, placed his groceries on the checkout stand, and walked toward her.

It would be the last time he ever saw himself walking.





About the Author

Moonlighting as a biographer and ghostwriter, I'm passionate about telling people's stories. *Rickicello* is deeply personal; I'm Rick's nephew, having laughed, lived, and learned alongside him, inspired by his resilience and our family's Italian heritage. With over 20 years of writing experience and two #1 bestsellers under my belt, I proudly volunteered to deliver Rick's life story to the masses and cement his incredible legacy. Connect with me at JagJefferson.com.



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