

LEXNEWS: "Did you remember how and when did you grab your first barbell?"

Bill GRANT : "That's a great question because everything is always about the beginning! I was about 9 years old actually when I first picked up my first barbell; I was too young to start. I really began when I was 12 and even at that time, it was too young. I really got introduced in bodybuilding by a friend of mine. Back in those days, in the late fifties and early sixties, this friend had weights in his yard. He started to show me how to lift weights and that kind was the beginning. At that time, there was really no place as the gyms we have now. You have to train in a basement or in your room. I went to various place, I also used to train in my bedroom and I train where I could but in 1960 I really got serious as I was 14 years old. I went to the YMCA. That was when I really got started seriously. It was a dark place in a basement with dirt but it was a great place! There were no fancy machines, only barbells, dumbbells and squat rack... The only machine we had was a leg press but it was made of wood! We also used truck gears for weights about 40 or 50 pounds. We didn't have all the fancy equipment the gyms have today. I weighed 110 pound and I was 4'9."

LEXNEWS: "So you wanted to gain weight?"

Bill GRANT : "Yes and I was always picked on, beaten by everybody even by the girls. I have two others sisters and they can beat me too. I got tired to be beaten all the time, I loved sport but I couldn't play football because I was too small. I compete in my first competition when I was 17 years old in my senior high school. I gained about 45 pounds in four years and I got myself bigger. The competition was called the "Mr High School New Jersey". I got the fifth place and that was my very first ending in a competition. And I read all the magazines religiously and honestly I saw Serge Nubret in a magazine, and Sergio Oliva, Reg Park,..."

LEXNEWS: "Sadly, Reg Park recently passed away. Did you know him and can you tell us what are the testimonies you wish to give about him?"

Bill GRANT : "I met Reg Park in 1975 during the film "Pumping Iron" in South Africa and in a matter fact Serge Nubret was there as well. I have to make a connection from Los Angeles to Paris and after to Johannesburg. Reg Park was a wonderful man; he was really a great champion and a great individual. He personally picked me up in the airport, it was a shock to see him pick me up in the airport! You should remember that at that time the apartheid was very strong in South Africa. So he took me in the airport and I told him that I need to go to the restroom and he answered me he don't think I will use the restroom here as there were special restroom for the black people and other for the white. He said to me that that restroom for black people wasn't clean and that was unacceptable. He told me: If you can wait you will got to my house and you can go the bathroom there. I was really in shock; he introduced me to his son Jon Jon with today I'm still friend with... Reg was very kind to me. He offered his home for a week. He took me to one of his favourite restaurant in town. And as I walk to the restaurant, I could see the people looking at me, you know Reg was very famous in South Africa with all his movies. There were Blacks who were looking through the window and they were starring seeing me sitting with Reg! It shows the real character of Reg, kind, loving, caring about the people."

LEXNEWS : "It was very courageous for him to act so"

Bill GRANT : "Exactly, that is the word I used in my tribute for his memory in an article for IronAge. He was a great guy and he always came in the Arnold Classic competition. He would fly from South Africa each year. I sat at the special table with him and his son a couple years ago and have a great time with him. He was everything I first admired when I read about him in the magazines. When you meet the man in person, you realize that everything was true. I consider that the bodybuilding world is going to miss him and we have just lost a great bodybuilder. He really loved the sport and was a great speaker for our sport. In his proper gym, Blacks were going to train and he didn't really care. It was a really great act of courage because he could have a lot of repercussions for his business and life at that time. A good guy!"

LEXNEWS: "You are a member of the golden age bodybuilding, what did you remember the most and what difference did you make compared with modern bodybuilding?"

Bill GRANT : "First of all, when I won the Mr America competition in 1972 and I beat Lou Ferrigno in that show. In 1974, I won the Mr World in Madison Square Garden; it was a great event because all the guys in the Gold's Gym were training in there: Arnold won Mr Olympia, as Franco. The third great memory in my life is when I received the Muscle Beach Hall of Fame a couple of years. And in this year, I received the Muscle Walk of Fame Award. It's the same thing as in Hollywood Walk of Fame. It's a great thing for me to see your titles put in the ground and to be remembered for ever in bodybuilding. That is for me the very best thing that could have been happen in my career. I'm very happy about that. The second part of your question is a difficult one because I still love bodybuilding today and I don't to give lessons and direction going. I think that back in our days we had a lot of more respect and honour. People could just look out and admire bodybuilders in TV, magazines and films such as "Pumping Iron" that really put bodybuilding in the map in the all world. When you went in Europe you'll have thousands of fans coming to bodybuilding shows. It's still a great sport now but a good physique is meaning symmetry, muscularity, appeal,... When people looked at us back then, they looked like we where statues and they got inspired by what they saw. Today, the first thing you hear from people is how many drugs did you take to look like this. It's very frustrating because we are back as the first period in the early fifties and sixties, it's not a progress. Again, I love all those guys but I really think that we have to get back where we used to be, it's not the fact that I'm envious or jealous or as big the guys are today but it should look very symmetrical, it should look good as someone else would like to look like. People are now terrified by the look of modern bodybuilders. I don't know what is going to get back but it's a real slow process."

LEXNEWS : "For you the problem comes from the money, the business and the drugs as steroids"

Bill GRANT : "Right like the others sports. We have to please the fans and the fans want more. When you are playing football, people want more goals, more spectacular events, the same with basket ball, baseball,... It's always hard to do better in sport without excess. The medias don't stop to tell you to get bigger, to see more bulk,... It's impossible to do this in a regular way, you have to look to the chemical. So we can't blame the bodybuilders directly, we all have to feel responsible for this situation because we all want more. I think we all have to turn it back to the main stream and moving forward from there."

LEXNEWS : "Do you think is it possible to do so without steroids, to stay stop to those drugs ?"

Bill GRANT : "Well, listen, I've seen a lot of natural bodybuilders who look very fantastic. But I think the problem is that we are so used to see guys who are so big, this will be a problem anyway. On the Olympics, there are a lot of controls about steroids, but we know there are a lot of new drugs and steroids which are not detected by those tests. It's impossible to clear it up integrally but it's possible in our sport to turn back at the time we have small waist, wide shoulders and look like statues with good lines. Now those guys have real wide waists, bulky and it's not a please in looking physique for most people. Of course, young people, and I heard this, they like to see those guys on stage and perform but they say: I don't want to look like them! I don't know what actually could be done; try to promote a movement basically for the health of the athletes. We hear more and more of young bodybuilders dying with the use of drugs whatever they might have been taking, and that's not a good thing for the sport as well because it's frightening."

LEXNEWS : "We often listen in gyms young people saying we have to take those steroids, there is no way to do anything else"

Bill GRANT : "I know, that's a mental attitude which is not good. The kids who are fourteen or fifteen tell me they need to start taking steroids. I tell them you have to let your natural body do the work and build up. At this age, their bodies don't need those drugs but the problem is that when they start with those drugs, they cut their own system off and their own system is no more producing regular hormones and that's a dangerous thing to do. I think the best thing to do, and I always repeat this, is through education. Tell them what is going to occur with the use of those steroids. I think the older bodybuilders can't be afraid to say: we all did use those steroids and we

can tell you how bad they are and what can happen to you if you use it. If we have to do it again, we will prefer not to use it. This is the question the guys have to ask themselves is the risk worth what you get from it. I don't think so. We have a great responsibility to make this testimony as we were great athletes ourselves and maybe the young will listen to us.

"The magazines are very powerful and have a big impact on what is going on. So I think that collectively the magazines need to write articles about steroids and why you shouldn't use them. We need to talk to doctors, to athletes who have already done it. I can't talk somebody not to take it but I can say to somebody what could happen if you do take it so now it's your decision."

LEXNEWS: "You are also well known for your perfectly balanced body. How is it possible to have a clear idea of our proper balance? Is there standard size for each body part such as the one Steve Reeves named as the standard classic?"

Bill GRANT : "Steve Reeves had a perfect physique. I think a physique should be very balanced, every body parts symmetrical with each other and Steve Reeves have a standard about how it should be and basically he has one of the best physiques around. He was a guy when people look at him, even women, said waouh ! that's the way I like to look like. He is still the model of what a bodybuilder should look like. Of course today, it's going to be bigger because the nutrition is better, the science is better but the body can't be more symmetrical than his. Another guy has that kind of perfect and symmetrical body, his name was Bob Paris. He has a perfect look, that typical look that general public say that's look good. They realize that's not too much and that is a body maybe they can look like. I think it's this kind of standard someone can have to start. A new guy, Dennis Wolff, has just come in the scene; he has that type of body. He is bigger than those guys but he has small waist, great lines and have a good symmetry. He is not too bulky with wide waist, he looks great for that century and that's the type of bodybuilder I think to try to get to. I really believe that this guy, Denis Wolff, is going to be Mr Olympia."

LEXNEWS : "We know that you are too modest to say it but you have a very nice and symmetrical physique with a small waist! How did you have this representation of your proper physique?"

Bill GRANT : "I think that bodybuilders always admire the other guys and Arnold said it perfectly once upon a time : a good genetics always comes first. When I first start I was very skinny but I had a good frame and a good genetics, I just build on it. Frank Zane was the same way, he has a great genetic. He wasn't huge but he had a body that all work look good together. He has not huge pecs or arms but he has "just" great symmetrical body. I think that you have to work within the room of your genetic, with what you have. I mean we all want to look like someone we admire and a lot of time it doesn't happen so I think it's important to work with what you have. You have to work for the best symmetrical physique. Keep in mind a nice first line and look like a statue, that's what I strive for when I started training and fortunately I was able to do that."

LEXNEWS : "Did you follow the standard classic body explained by Steve Reeves in the old time ?"

Bill GRANT : "Yes, the lines should be symmetrical. The neck should be symmetrical, the waist, Yes, I do believe in that and a lot of guy back in the day wanted to achieve that and I think lot of them did. I think Arnold had that kind of a look, Frank Zane too, so do Serge Nubret, that's we all strive for. Steve Reeves was the role model for all of us, between him and Reg Park and of course we were a little bit bigger and muscular than Steve Reeves but we had that same look, but today again it's going overboard. But I think in time we might be able to get everything in order but it's a slow process. I wish everyone in that sport will realize that the overuse of those drugs are very unhealthy and dangerous in the end. I can say that because I did it myself. I can speak where we are going. It's not a healthy look of the sport as it used to be."

LEXNEWS: "You are very involved in nutrition today with your society Bill Grant Nutrition. Can you explain to our readers the importance of a well balanced diet and how is it possible to understand this topic which seems very difficult?"

Bill GRANT : "That's a good question because nutrition is really the key. If you don't get the right nutrition nothing is going to happen. You need to know exactly what you want to do with your body

and you have to follow a diet accordingly. A lot of people think that if you starve yourself you are going to lose weight but it's only the opposite. If you don't eat, your body is going to send a message : store the fat and burn the protein which is the muscle. The only way is to make the body burn the fat ,and it's always sound strange when I say this, is to have more small meals in the day. People say what ? looking at me as if I have two heads! You have to trick the body as we have a complicated body, it's not a simple machine, it's incredible what it can stand, how much stress you can put on it and it still recovers. You have to get a good balanced diet of proteins, carbohydrates, you don't want to overdo with proteins. Years ago we were talked we needed 200 or 300 gr of protein a day and Bill Pearl said at the time 175 gr of proteins are fine and I thought at the time he was crazy, that was not enough. He was right, if you are taking too much protein, your body is not going to absorb it and what is not going to be used is going to be store in the liver and transformed into fat. Again, like the body line, everything has to be in a balance in a diet. It's the same thing with the supplements. We all know that there are a lot of supplements in the market today. And a lot are not very good and even not good at all. Some supplements are important because the way foods are engineered, the way they are grown in bad soils, the food is not as good as it used to be, you know with all the chemicals they give to the animals. There is something which is always a surprise for me: they say the steroids are illegal for the human and you shouldn't take them but they give it to the animals we have to eat! So I cannot understand..."

LEXNEWS : "Do you take organic foods ?"

Bill GRANT : "I try to get as organic foods that I can because all the foods we eat today are empty calories. That is why I also think that a good supplementation is important, especially with people who are very busy. You don't need fifty supplements but you need proteins, mineral tablets, liver tablets, vitamin B 12 is also very important because it's help convert food into energy, amino acids because your body only absorbs 70% versus 30 or 40 % without them. So it's very important to have a good supplementation so I create a product which is called "*Creatine Cocktail*". It's not a fantastic product which promises you to be huge in two months. I don't make those statements about my products. The recovery is also the key in building your body. If you don't well recover, not only you are not going to make progress but you are going to be injured. This is really a science. If you don't have this science in mind, nothing of what you want to gain is going to work. Some guy are genetics freak and they can do what ever they want and eat the same way and still make progress. But the average person is not like that. So you have to be scientific when you do this. You've got to study, to read and to know what those things are good for. A lot of people take it because they read about it. But I recommend to be sure there are researches on those products. Everything in my products has been researched and that all the elements work together in synergy."

LEXNEWS: "You have just talked about the recover: what are the main errors you see in a gym. And how much time a week should we train?"

Bill GRANT : "That's an important question too. I always insist on that point. Back in the days, when I was training for competition, I trained in a maximum four days a week. That was good for me but everybody has a different recovery time. Arnold was an another case: he can train six days a week and twice a day! I can't recover from that training. I tried to train that way for one week and I lost five pounds in that week... My body just wouldn't recover from that. I went back to my four days, I trained Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and I had 3 days rest. My body reacted perfectly to that. Now there is another issue where are dealing with. When we are young, we are able to recover very quickly. But now here is the key: when we get older, let's say over 40, the body is not going to recover as fast as before whatever what you take. So the idea is to train less time a week. I work today twice a week; I do upper body one day and the lower body the other day. Basically, I only need one day and the rest is recovery and you continue to make gain in that way. The injuries occur because we continue to always train as we did before when we were twenty, just can't do this. So you have to modify your workout and to cut back and know that less is probably better. And since I have following this two days a week program, I feel good with my training. For forty years old men, I wouldn't go more than 3 days a week training. You know guys are very amazed how I look today with only 2 days training a week, you can look my pictures on my website and I'm 61 years old. My product helps me too, I always use products that I sold. You know I will never sell a product that I can't give to my son."

LEXNEWS: "What are your advises for a weak body part which doesn't want to grow?"

Bill GRANT : “We all have body parts that lag. The body parts that are really working good you don't have to train as hard but you should do a little bit more to those body parts that are lagging. Let's say that your chest is not the way you wish. Then train a little bit more your chest and train less your back and your shoulders. Not stop but just cut back a little bit so that the chest can catch up and then you can going up. I've a big problem as my arms grew so fast that if I did chins they will grow too! So I stopped doing directly curls until everything catches up and it worked. Remember, most body parts, specially your shoulders and arms, always get a workout any move when you do such pushing, bench press or shoulder press, your triceps are always working. Anything that are involved in pulling movement, chins up or rows, works your biceps. That is a reason why people often can't have bigger arms because they over train them. That is the reason why you don't need too much arms work to have as response. If you do too much work on arms, you almost over train them. Remember, it's very easy to over train. It's harder to under train! You must be very careful with that. Let's me give you an example: for my arms I actually do 9 or 10 sets and I choose 2 or 3 exercises for the biceps and for the triceps and 2 sets each. I superset on and that is the key, I train them together. And everybody who followed this advises told me: waouh, my arms grow! That is the reason why I developed my videos on my website. It's what we call old school training. Today's videos of bodybuilding are not instructing, they just working out. I mean it's nice to watch someone work out but what that kind of a workout is going to do to me if there are no explanations. You need to explain to people what to do and why they should do this and in my videos I gave a lot of explanations. That's the way I'm going to do, I'm going to develop more videos as I love this sport of bodybuilding and I love helping people. It's nice to see people reach their goals with your knowledge. Personal training is great, I feel like a sculptor as Leonard de Vinci chiselling a physique. I love to talk about my sport and passion.”

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