

I have written and sent the following letter to the publisher of *Penthouse* magazine. Whether he prints it or not will no doubt be determined by what stories about a man will sell the most magazines.

March 6, 1983

Mr. Bob Guccione
c/o Penthouse Magazine
909 3rd Avenue
New York City, New York

Dear Mr. Guccione:

My name is Daniel Inosanto. I am writing to you because of Albert Goldman's two-part article, "The Life and Death of Bruce Lee." Since my name was used in the articles, and quotes were attributed to me, I felt the need to express some concerns I had.

To begin, I believe I should establish my credentials as a student and friend of Bruce Lee.

I was first introduced to Bruce 19 years ago in 1964 at Ed Parker's First International Karate Championships in Long Beach, California. I was the Elimination Tournament Director and held a black belt in Kenpo karate under Ed Parker. I was immediately impressed by a superb demonstration by Bruce, given before the leading karate instructors in the U.S., who also were impressed with his knowledge and skill.

I joined Bruce in 1965, studying with him until he left for Hong Kong in the latter part of 1970. I started teaching for him in 1967 and was given the honor of running his Los Angeles martial art school when he left for the Orient in 1970. Because of this very close association with Bruce, I believe I have a better knowledge of and insight into Bruce Lee's history than others in this field with the exception of Taky Kimura, my senior in Seattle, Washington, and Ted Wong, my junior in Los Angeles, California.

With this background established, I would now like to comment on several points made in the article:

Bob Wall and Chuck Norris met Mr. Lee in 1964; however, their actual association with him did not begin until 1967. They were casual acquaintances of Bruce and were never initiated into the inner circle of the Jeet Kune Do clan. The idea that they gave Bruce "tips on fighting techniques," as though he was a beginner, is misleading because it is obvious that Bruce was already functioning at an extremely high level as early as 1964, and he continued to improve at a phenomenal rate each year. As a side point, Bruce was definitely not a "skinny kid" and did not eat "junk food" as the story indicated. He was an early advocate and practitioner of a strict diet and nutrition, and although on the slender side, he was very well built as everyone knew who observed him in his training outfit during a workout.

With a familiarity of Jeet Kune Do, its history and practices, comes an understanding that Bruce could not have drawn knowledge from Bob Wall or Chuck Norris (who only practice a Korean form of karate). Bruce's footwork and his kicks were his own modifications of the Southern and Northern Chinese styles of gung-fu, French savate, Thai boxing and Burmese boxing. As a whole, his hand techniques resembled Western boxing, Wing Chun gung-fu, Filipino kali, Thai boxing and Indonesian pencak silat, which are totally contrary to Bob Wall's and Chuck Norris's styles of karate. (The techniques of Wing Chun alone are totally nonexistent in most karate systems.)

Contrary to the philosophy of teachers of karate, Bruce was an innovator. He was a man who would study, in detail, each style he came across and would then go beyond each style, searching and researching for the best essence in each. As such, he received criticism, but as his knowledge increased his revolutionary techniques and concepts became widely admired, respected and very extensively imitated. It is also true that with that kind of recognition came jealousy and distortion.

Segments of the two-part article dealt with the personality of Bruce Lee. As with all people, Bruce had many facets to his being; however, Bruce did have an intensity about himself, his beliefs and his art that we find in very few people. His philosophical mind led him to reach depths of understanding and comprehension where little human apperception exists; thereby opening avenues to misunderstanding and confusion, not on Bruce's part, but on the part of those who had not reached a level of consciousness adequate enough to understand him.

Bruce was self-confident in his knowledge and skill and when others were unable to comprehend the truths he pointed out to them, frustration became pre-eminent and impatience ultimately ensued. He was, however, never a "bully" but a stern and excellent instructor, pushing his students to reach their full potential as martial artists. Bruce was an educated man. He was a loving family man, a trusted friend and a man with a sense of humor. Underlying this was a driving individualist who possessed a single-mindedness of purpose found in great men throughout history.

Another fallacy proposed by the articles which I would find almost humorous, if it were not so erroneous, is the conjecture that Bruce was afraid of "full contact" (karate matches).

Bruce never turned down a legitimate challenge. Five full years before the public became aware of full contact karate, Bruce Lee was regularly sparring with his students (and many of them held black belts from varying styles of karate), as well as gung-fu instructors and outstanding Western boxers.

Bruce trained karate man Joe Lewis in full contact application. He, in turn, introduced it to the public. Bruce's philosophy of martial arts was the belief in himself and the introspection that participation in karate tournaments was fruitless for him. He was beyond that level of interest and performance. To me, it would be like Michelangelo entering a local art contest to try to prove himself an artist.

The inference put forth in the article that all good fighters participated in these tournaments was like saying a girl must enter a beauty contest to prove she is beautiful. It is like saying a girl cannot be beautiful if she does not enter a Miss America contest. As we all know, nothing could be further from the truth,

because there are thousands of girls who are beautiful who never enter beauty contests and their faces are never even seen in magazines. Since Bruce did not place much importance on these tournaments, because his goals in the martial arts were different, so it is that some girls who are beautiful do not place much emphasis on entering beauty contests because their goals are different also.

Another point which I found ridiculous in the articles was Mr. Goldman's inability to see the difference between reality and fiction in Bruce's apparent change of styles in his movies. In his article, he states that "Overnight Lee dropped his lifelong insistence on the simple direct style of the street fighter and embraced instead an elaborate and theatrical style filled with increasingly baroque and bizarre flourishes." Goldman goes on to say, "The katas or ritualized training routines that Lee had ridiculed in the past, he employed now to build suspense before a big fight. . . ." As I stated in my book, "Don't mistake theatrical Jeet Kune Do for the functional Jeet Kune Do." Bruce told me he purposely "hyped" action sequences in the movies in a preposterously flamboyant style for entertainment value, and for demonstrating the perfection of human body mechanics. Bruce Lee's character in the movies is not to be confused with his real martial arts fighting techniques.

The total and complete misunderstanding of Bruce is self-evident in Mr. Goldman's belittling of Bruce Lee's appearance in the TV series "Longstreet." One of Bruce's passions in life was the philosophical understructure of the martial arts. In his appearance on this show he was allowed to escape totally from the fictional characterizations he created for his movies, and present martial arts in the light of Oriental wisdom and its philosophical and psychological teachings. I am most pleased to report that the ability to comprehend this idea was present in the hundreds of people who responded with letters and phone calls praising Bruce and seeking further knowledge of this too frequently misunderstood element of the martial arts. Cleveland Amory, in his review of the Longstreet series (for TV Guide), hailed Bruce's acting as "tried and true." He definitely was not a "prancing, faggot dance instructor lispng sensitivity, sensitivity, relationship, relationship."

There were many people who warned me not to be interviewed by Mr. Goldman for this article. Their argument rested on a previous work on Elvis Presley, done by Mr. Goldman which turned into a scathing denunciation of a dead man who could not defend himself, refute or contradict Mr. Goldman; however, I felt obligated to do the interview, cancelling an appointment that Sunday to fit him in. I wanted to be sure Bruce did not receive the same treatment as Elvis. It seems Mr. Goldman's style of journalism rests not on balance and objectivity but on emphasizing negativity.

While I do not agree with the many people who say that Mr. Goldman is a parasite feeding off men, I still wish he would maintain more symmetry and impartiality.

Mr. Goldman's article ends with a conclusion smacking of racism when he says, "Bruce Lee put balls on four million Chinamen." Bruce would be furious at such an implication. He was a man who honored and respected his forebears. Bruce recognized the greatness of the Chinese people throughout history. To say Bruce "put balls on four million Chinese" is not only racist, it is a childish,

ludicrous falsehood.

What I had hoped for and desired in articles such as these was equality and accuracy. Not too much to ask. Whether as individuals we admired him or despised him is not of great concern. What is important is a recognition of his contribution and influence as a man, a teacher and an initiator.

Sincerely,

Daniel Inosanto

