

Book Me, Danno!

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CHRONICLE

By Anna Hanks

JUNE 14, 1999: Each summer, a young man's fancy turns to thoughts of vintage Hawaiian shirts. This is troublesome for me, as it only brings up memories of watching *Hawaii Five-0* as a child.

News & Opinion I admit it. I've been a *Hawaii Five-0* fan for most of my life. At first, just the thrill of being allowed to stay up past my appointed bedtime sparked my interest in the program. And after only a few episodes, the pretty scenery -- the always blue skies, the sparsely populated beaches, and attractive cast of locals -- kept me coming back week after week. But it had to be more than that.

Now that I am older, I recognize how strong of an effect the show had on me. Why was the mere unexpected discovery of an episode on afternoon TV so exciting? Why does that new Old Navy commercial, featuring that signature *Five-0* music, with Carrie Donovan holding up a pair of oversized binoculars and imploring her canine companion to "Hang 20, Surf Doggie!" make me positively giddy?

I wondered. It had to be more than just nostalgia. Then it hit me: All of the boys I have dated have resembled, in one way or another, either Steve McGarrett or Danny "Danno" Williams.

Who isn't fascinated by *Five-0* honcho Steve McGarrett, played by the square-jawed and helmet-haired actor Jack Lord? His strong air of natural authority is probably what first got me. In one *Hawaii Five-0* episode, the plot involved the Navy and CIA working together in cooperation with McGarrett and crew. The agencies all worked together cooperatively, naturally deferring to Steve as their commander, without any conflict of egos. The term "suspension of disbelief" hardly covers this plot hole.

So now, I have a thing for tall, dark, and skinny things. This led me to date rock musicians, starving artists, and other black-leather-clad types. To a one, these boys were all authoritative and uncommunicative, except for statements of fact. Imagine McGarrett saying to Danno, "I'll pick you up at seven," and you'll have a taste of what many of them they were like -- in more ways than one.

The other group I dated were the Dannys, patterned after McGarrett's loyal sidekick, as played by teen dream James MacArthur. The character's full name was actually Dan Williams. But he was never addressed as such. More often than not, he went by nicknames, such as the diminutive "Danny" or the subordinate "Danno." Fellows like Danno are the perennially second-in-charge, the eternally boyish. Think of Danno as Peter Pan with handcuffs. There was clearly a father-son dynamic going on between Steve McGarrett and Danno. Yet Danno never had any apparent desire to kill his

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father figure and inherit his domain of fighting crime.

My Danno fixation led to me date perennial students, poets, and other underemployed members of society. One notable candidate in this field even looked suspiciously Danno-like -- with that cherubic heart face and those darling curls. Pseudo-Dan spent an entire decade pursuing an undergraduate degree. He did college radio for more years than most people do college.

Why have these two *Hawaii Five-0* hunks stuck in my heart for all these years? It could have just as easily have been Fonzie and Richie Cunningham from *Happy Days*, or Ponch and what's-his-name from *CHiPS*. But it wasn't. It was the men of *Hawaii five-ohhhhh*.

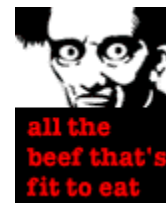
Looking back, I think the reason has a lot to do with the raging maleness of the show's famous montage intro. The theme explodes with the surge of a giant wave, swelling to the beat of primal surf drums. And if that wave -- just on the peak of cresting -- doesn't signal passion, then you just haven't been reading enough trashy novels. And what about all those close-ups of eyes and binoculars? Talk about intensifying the "male gaze" -- a concept so thoroughly dissected in women's studies classes. And boy, would that class have a field day with this next element in the montage: an inarguably phallic shot of a jet fuselage from underneath ... with two engines on either side of it. Think about it. Our first glance at our hero comes next. A helicopter closes in on the top of a tall white building (am I just seeing phallic everywhere?), zooming to a close-up of Jack Lord as Steve McGarrett. Then Hawaiian dancers work their grass skirts to a frenzy -- shot from the eye level of a patron in a "gentleman's" establishment, culminating, finally with a stream of long, black Fords barreling down the hot Hawaiian blacktop.

How could I help but love this show? How could I not take these two as my standards for men?

In the end, the mega-males won, and the sensitive Danno types lost out. In the boyfriend department, I wound up with a variation on Jack Lord: black hair, speaks in statements of fact, authoritative in his subject area -- after all he is the alpha geek at his office. But that's where the similarity ends. It is hard to conceive of Jack Lord rubbing his girlfriend's tootsies. Maybe it wasn't McGarrett who won out in the end, after all.

Rub 'em, Danno!

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