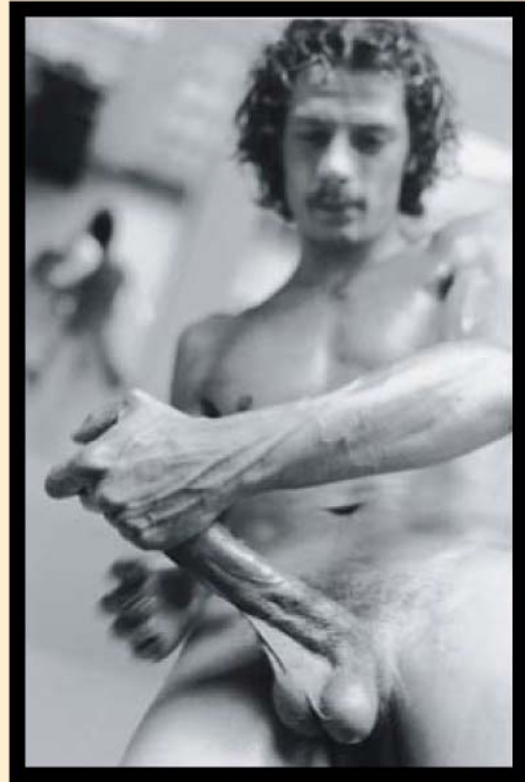


THE BIG BOOK OF DICK

ARE THERE ENOUGH
JAWBREAKERS AND
KIDNEY BUSTERS
IN THE WORLD TO
FILL A 384-PAGE
MAGNUM OPUS ON
MASSIVE MEAT?

BY KEN KNOX

When Dian Hanson, author of the 2006 phenomenon *The Big Book of Breasts*, was looking for a follow-up to that release, she turned to a topic that has fascinated the human race for centuries. "It's pretty daunting when you've had such a hit, because you know there's nothing else that's going to do as well—except maybe the one other body part that inspires the same fanatical obsession as breasts," says Hanson. "And that's the penis."



Her boss, publisher Benedikt Taschen, signed off on the idea of *The Big Penis Book*—despite the concerns of his sales department. "They told me they wouldn't be able to sell the book or get it out in stores," Hanson recalls. "Everyone said, 'Isn't this book only going to sell to gay men?' And I said, 'Well, you know, there are an awful lot of gay men—you don't need this book to sell to straight men to be successful.'"

With Taschen on board, Hanson began the long and arduous process of compiling photographs. She chose to focus primarily on the 1970s and '80s for several reasons. "That was a time when it was first legal to photograph men naked," she notes. Following the landmark trial of Champion Studios owner Walter Kundzicz—who was able to beat his arrest for photographing men with only sheer scarves covering their penises by pointing out that the law did not specify that the penis had to be covered by something opaque—a wealth of male nude content began to pop up in magazines. "There was a lot of great material coming out in those days," Hanson notes. "Suddenly everyone was taking pictures of penises, so finding those photographers who had lived through that period was an integral part of putting this book together."

During the year she spent tracking down those snap-happy pioneers, she was often the recipient of morbid misinformation. "I kept being assured that everyone I wanted to talk to was dead,"

Hanson says. "And, lo and behold, I'd find out they were alive."

One such photographer was David Hurles, otherwise known as Old Reliable. "His work was unlike anything else," Hanson states. "The men looked like real men. They'd be posing, making muscles, giving the finger—they were those rough, tattooed bad boys I'd always been attracted to, so from the very beginning of the project I wanted David. I was told he was dead, that he was ill, that he was insane, was a drug addict, that he had gone crazy and wouldn't speak to anyone. I was also informed that he was living in Los Angeles. I kept asking and eventually was able to track him down. It turns out he lives just a few blocks from my office. It took a while—I wrote him, I called him—but after about a month he got back to me. He was cautious at first but turned out to be the star of the book."

The showcased photographers include Craig Calvin Anderson of Sierra Domino Studios, former Falcon Studios photographer Fred Bissonnes (a seminal contributor to *Men* magazine), and the late Bob Mizer, whose Athletic Model Guild was one of the first studios to focus on the male figure. Hanson was also adamant about featuring the work of Third World Studios photographer Jim Jager, who died in 1983. "Jim was known to be willing to fly anywhere in the country if he got a tip that there was a man with a big penis, and he photographed some of the biggest," Hanson says. "He had the advantage of not just shooting porn stars or traditional models—he went out on the streets and found models."

"These were the guys I was really looking for, the men obsessed who were getting atypical subjects," Hanson



continues. "It's people like that who make this book so much more than just a collection of big dick pictures. They weren't doing it for the money but because it was their life obsession. They were obsessed with cock. They didn't get wealthy off of this. And when you consider how many times they got robbed or kicked to the curb you say, 'Was it worth it?' To them it was, and their passion comes through in their pictures and their interviews. That's why you don't see much glamour photography in the book but rather the kind of gritty realism that makes these photographers' work so special and authentic."

Hanson's commentaries in the book are the natural outgrowth of a career spent in the trenches of adult publishing. "There are things I know from 25 years of making sex magazines," she says. "I know what readers are interested in. People who look at sex books are not illiterates—they're every person. When you look at a nude picture, something that arouses you, you're having a little fanciful relationship with that person, so you want a little background."

She had originally intended to interview several of the models, but the whereabouts of those still living proved elusive. "When a model disappears, he disappears. So instead of the models, I interviewed the photographers—they're really the stars of the book anyway. They give you a truly fascinating picture of this time period: They describe what they struggled with and how much they sacrificed to do what they did."

Though she expects *The Big Penis Book* to sell primarily to gay men, she knows it will make a terrific bachelorette party gift. "I think women will be a much larger market than people might imagine," Hanson says. "And a certain amount of straight guys will buy this for their wives or girlfriends—either to show their self-confidence or to flagellate themselves. If you know anything about guys and their dicks you know that a lot of them like to torment themselves about their penis size. For straight men who consider themselves under-size, this book will also be a best seller. I've already had straight men contact me and say, 'You're going to think it's odd, but I'm really excited about this book.'"

She chalks this up to the ongoing fascination with the male member: "Men have always been far, far more fascinated with the penis than women have, because it represents male power. The penis isn't just about sex—it's about male identity. So the bigger the penis, the bigger the man. It's probably the most important body part historically. People are fascinated but they're also terrified. Straight men are terrified of this book, but they can't stop looking at it. Neither can the rest of us. We're already at number one on the Amazon pre-sale ranks, and the book hasn't even come out yet."

Regardless of how well the book does, Hanson is quite satisfied with the results of her extra-large labors. "This was maybe the most fun I've had working on a book at Taschen," she says. "It's the first one where I could really get that kind of excitement from looking at something that arouses you day after day." ■

