



Hung: A Meditation on the Measure of Black Men in America

Scott Poulson-Bryant

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Following in the footsteps of such bestselling, taboo-breaking books as Randall Kennedy's *Nigger* and J. L. King's *On the Down Low*, *Hung* brings a topic previously discussed only in intimate settings out into the open. In a brilliant, multilayered look at the pervasive belief that African American men are prodigiously endowed, Scott Poulson-Bryant interweaves his own experiences as a black man in America with witty analyses of how black male sexuality is expressed in books, film, television, sports, and pornography.

"Hung" is a double entendre, referring not only to penis size but to the fact that black men were once literally hung from trees, often for their perceived sexual prowess and the supposed risk it posed to white women. As a poignant reminder, he begins his book with a letter to Emmett Till, the teenager who was lynched in Mississippi in the mid-1950s for whistling at a white woman.

For Poulson-Bryant and other men of his generation, society's deep-seated obsession with the sexual powers of black men has had an enormous, if often deceptive, influence on how they perceive themselves and on the assumptions made by others. His tales of his sexual encounters with both sexes, along with anecdotes about the lives of various friends and colleagues, are wryly and at times shockingly revealing. Enduring racial perceptions have shaped popular culture as well, and Poulson-Bryant offers a thorough, thought-provoking look at media-created images of the "Well-Hung Black Male." He deftly deconstructs movies like *Mandingo* and *Shaft*, articles in the popular press, and edgy works like Robert Mapplethorpe's *Black Book*, while also providing distinctive profiles of icons like porn star Lexington Steele and rapper L.L. Cool J.

A scintillating mixture of memoir and cultural commentary, *Hung* is the first and only book to take on phallic fixation and uncover what lies below. Readers may be scandalized, but they'll also have plenty to ponder about America's views on how black men measure up.

Hung: A Meditation on the Measure of Black Men in America Details

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From Reader Review Hung: A Meditation on the Measure of Black Men in America for online ebook

Jill says

Eh, I thought it was an interesting premise for a book, a reflection on the assumption that all black men are well-hung, a discussion about the racial fears this belief plays into, the African American author's insecurity about his own lack of well hungedness (LOL- there's a great new word).

However, I didn't really love the writing style, and what shut me down cold at the end was a letter to Emmett Till, expressing how he was killed for his sexuality (for supposedly whistling at a white woman). I didn't really get how it was connected to the previous writing (as the previous writing was light in nature, talking to porn stars, to women about sleeping with black men, etc.) and seemed an attempt to put a more serious spin on it, and ended up sounding really contrived. Also, casting Till's death as a response to his sexuality is a little strange, I always thought it had very little to do with him actually doing anything sexual (because in that time and that place, that would have been extremely dangerous), and much more to do with racist assumptions on the part of those involved.

Dawn says

This book gets 2.5 stars.

In short the author has teased out an interesting idea which explores how a black man's sexuality is categorized in American society.

But that is all it is an interesting idea instead it felt more like the bigger the penis the more success you have as a man. I am not a man so maybe this is true.

Anyway the idea was interesting but there was not enough there to make me believe it. There are some valid points in the book and I do not want to belittle that however I think some additional research or perhaps better defines points of view would have gone along way.

Jen says

Pretty entertaining discussion of the obsession with Black men's property, if you know what I mean, and you do know what I mean.

Written by a fat Black guy with a small wang, it is a good book on the obsession and the unnecessary pressure it puts on Black men. Not necessarily a funny/humorous book, but more of a pretty decent social critique.

If you like Black men and/or weiners, or both, you should read this. It's pretty entertaining.

Michael says

Investigates sexploitation of black men in history and popular culture and points to a direction forward. A positive book built on the ashes of our screwed-up society! It is explicit and solidly researched by an informed interviewer who has great access and excellent questions.

"And white men, history has shown us, anointed black men with the hypermasculine role that is, cleverly, as corrosive as it is celebratory."

I am working on a project for my class about the African diaspora, including the vestiges of slavery. This is one of the books that has helped resolve the subject for me. Beyond Slavery is another.

Nakia says

Scott Poulson Bryant brought up a lot of interesting points concerning the Black male penis, namely how the myth of its large size began during slavery; how it's continued into modern times and affects men from all walks of life, from the board room to the movie screen; how men feel about the myth (research proves it's actually fact for most); whether its a blessing or a curse; and how this myth is connected to the way Black men are treated in the media.

I'd never heard of being "white girled" or the hierarchy in the porn industry concerning Black men and their costars...this book was educational on a level that I am unsure I was prepared for.

I found it odd that Poulson-Bryant had more anecdotal evidence than facts to prove his points. Talking to friends and acquaintances about their penile experiences doesn't seem like the stuff on which a book with so many social and psychological implications should rest.

I can't say that I enjoyed the book outside of his assessment of the "The Hung List" of Hollywood (a list of well hung actors was printed in Details magazine, with not a single Black actor mentioned) and how Black men in the media are portrayed when sexual assault enters the picture.

All I can say: it was eye opening and it led to a very entertaining coed discussion with my book club.

Ron Turner says

I liked the premise, a cultural history of the black penis, but overall it just felt like a magazine article stretched out into a book. There just wasn't enough to talk about. I gave up when he started rambling about movie stars.

Cate says

Gets better a few chapters in, although it is still a little uneven. He's working with some real subject matter, and I think sometimes his writing style just isn't enough for the task. Nonetheless, worth the read.

Chris says

This is a really compelling book. I've read it twice, and there's a lot of thought to be teased from its pages. It talks about two things that are highly taboo in our society; the male sex organ and race. We obsess about both of them, but do very little thinking, and they hold much more power than they should. It's a very personal book, too, which I think is key to what makes it so essential. If you're a man, trying to write a book about the penis from an objective distance is a fool's errand. From the moment you were old enough to notice it, you've been worrying about it and wondering about it and playing with it. You grow up and you find your email inbox filled with messages telling you that it's too small or doesn't last long enough. And black men get an extra message: your cock is the best and worst thing about you. It makes you desirable and feared and white men will always want to be you, even though that very desire will compel them to keep you down. This love/hate mythology that our society has created around black men's penises is what killed 14-year-old Emmett Till, whose murder is a thread that's interwoven through the whole book. Starting with an open letter to Till, Poulson-Bryant looks at his own experiences growing up, the feelings of himself and others toward his cock, talks to other black men about the pressures to live up to the "big black cock" myth, and generally looks about how black sexuality is viewed in mainstream media (he does a full analysis of "Mandingo"), and porno. Highly recommended as an honest examination of masculinity and race and their intersections.

Noir says

This book is garbo. Seriously.. it's one man's narrow little worldview that meanders and loses focus ever chapter. By the end I just wanted to power through it to put it out of it's misery.

Ari says

An interesting book, with an interesting perspective. I had very high expectations, having read Guyland right before starting this book, which I think does contribute to my mediocre feelings toward it. When talking about gender - males and females/men and women - stereotypes are arguably one of the first categories that come to mind. Understanding the importance of the male appendage (from a sociological perspective) is therefore crucially important when exploring ideas of masculinity. In a culture where white majority rules, it's even more important to understand gender/masculinity as it applies to "Black Men in America". Quick read, though enlightening. Worth picking up if you're looking to pursue a well rounded idea of masculinity.

Kim says

On the whole, the book only skims the surface of what is a huge topic; what does our stereotype of the black male in society really reflect and how do they choose to live up to it? Poulson-Bryant really doesn't ever get to the answer but brings up valid points throughout. Part memoir, part media discussion, part penis discussion it's a valuable read. His direct and honest approach is refreshing, but there's more to be analyzed and this book can only be a jumping off point. If in his measure, he's just average!

Katrice says

The overall concept of the book was good and he explored relatively interesting topics, myths and assumptions abt blk men. However, the certain language became redundant and after a while I found myself speed reading with the hope to find something more interesting. He raised some insightful points and I liked that he was able to incorporate history into the content of his message (major plus for me). Def has interesting topics that will make for great group discussion.

Eric says

I must say the the title really caught my attention when I saw this book in the bookstore. I found the premise of the book to be really interesting, and as a black man I felt that I could relate on a number of different levels. While to book starts out strong, it becomes a didactic after a while, as the writing isn't as strong as it should be and as the stories seems to meander as oppose to have a true focus and direction. If nothing else, I think this book incites us to think and begin the dialogue on topics that are often taboo within our community.

Lauren says

This book is actually a really interesting look at how Black men are defined by, revered for and feared because of their mythical penis size. It looks at our historical views of Black men and how they are still effected by them. This book made me think, and it was well written.

Andreoid says

I loved the book and it's analysis the first time I read it about five or six years ago. I just finished reading it again about an hour ago. I still like Hung - I even highlighted some points SPB made, but I think because I've read more on topics similar to this that do a better job if going deeper and painting a fuller less subjective picture, I downgraded my rating from four to three stars. I think it's a great sort of 101 read to this type of analysis of race, sexuality and how it all fits into American culture as it relates to the straight/gay/bi/non- identified black male perspective.
