

## Think About the Ink

(An in-depth chat with John Quinlan, by Denysé Bridger)

Recently it was my distinct pleasure to create a special interview with John Quinlan. We wanted something different, and specifically something that is very much uniquely John. So, here we are, and the results of our chat are fascinating and I hope very enjoyable for everyone who knows and likes this remarkable man.



For those of you who aren't already familiar with John, here's a mini-bio to acquaint you with him: John Quinlan is a man who has worn many hats in his lifetime, he's been involved in athletics, professional wrestling, fitness and modeling over the years since the age of nineteen. John's been an image model for dozens of apparel brands over the years along with appearing in television documentaries, commercials, art gallery print work and having his likeness used on children's literature book covers. He's also been a spokes-model for apparel brands as far away as Japan and Asia just to name a few. John's been a supplement company image model who is currently signed as an Official Sponsored Athlete with Athletic Xtreme Supplement Co., and he'll be featured in Jillian Bullock's Book 'Elite Warrior Fitness' which is due out later this year.

John is a Physique competitor and a current Romance Novel Cover model as well. He has often been referred to as "the most tattooed male romance cover model in the world today" and that is what we're here to talk about.

I figured we might as well go back to the beginning, so my first question was obvious. Most people when they get their first tattoo do so to commemorate a special event in some fashion. Thinking back, John, what was your first tattoo and what made you decide to leave a permanent tribute to it on your body? He was, not surprising, very candid in his reply. "Great question Denyse! My very first tattoo was way back in 1993 I got the Notre Dame Fighting Irishman Logo. It is so funny when I think back to how different things were. Tattoos were illegal in Massachusetts so me and a bunch of

friends went to Rhode Island to get our first. It has been long since covered up but it is still a fond memory because I am part Irish and it did have meaning at the time.” Of course, that begged the obvious question: Why did you choose to cover it up? “Eventually I opted for sleeve work that goes from the top of that shoulder down to about my elbow so it just got buried with a brand new oriental dragon theme half sleeve. I really love this piece so I can deal with it being gone,” John informed me with a smile.

Do all of your tattoos have a special significance to you? And do you have any favorites? “Every single one of my tattoos has their own special meaning. I love them all but if I had to say one in particular that is a little extra special it would have to be the oriental kanji symbol for ‘family’ on the inside of my left wrist as it represents my three beautiful children.” That’s wonderful, and leads nicely to the question: how does your family feel about or view your artistically enhanced body? Your children must find the tattoos very interesting and pretty. “All good Denyse, my wife feels I have the look and body to pull off a lot of ink which, at this point, actually are part of my persona. The kids are funny and the one who makes me laugh is my second child, Cole, who is three. He looks at them and says, “Daddy you have crayon all over your arms.” So funny, love it!” You have to love the directness of children, and their take on life.



For those who haven’t met you except to see your image, and know very little about you – how many tattoos do you currently have, and where? Isn’t that a great leading question? As always, John is gracious and informative in his response. “I currently have nineteen individual tattoos. They cover various areas that include my abdomen, arms and shoulders, back and hands. On my abdomen there is a tribal sun symbol wrapped in barb wire around my navel with the kanji ‘courage’ symbol next to it. On my arms and shoulders I have two half sleeves, a tribal wrist bracelet, oriental strength and tranquility symbols, a red and black nautical star and the oriental kanji ‘family’ symbol. On my back there is three Celtic crosses with the kanji ‘hope’ and ‘happiness’ symbols and two more red and black nautical stars.

“Finally on my right ring finger is a tribal shamrock and the oriental symbol of ‘perseverance’ with a red and black nautical adjacent to that on my right pinky finger.



The tribal shamrock I got approved by professional MMA fighter Frank Shamrock before I put it on as it started out as the symbol of his dojo. I already know what number twenty is going to be but that is a secret for now. What I can tell you is when the time is right for me to get it I will be going to Pino Bros. Ink in Cambridge, Massachusetts. This is one of the best tattoo studios in the world run by owner Frank Pino Jr. and my artist Matt Myrdal. The best of the best!"

This led me to another point I thought we could consult John on. If someone contemplating their first tattoo approached you for advice, what would you offer them? "Great question, Denysé, because majority of people will be faced with this. My advice would be

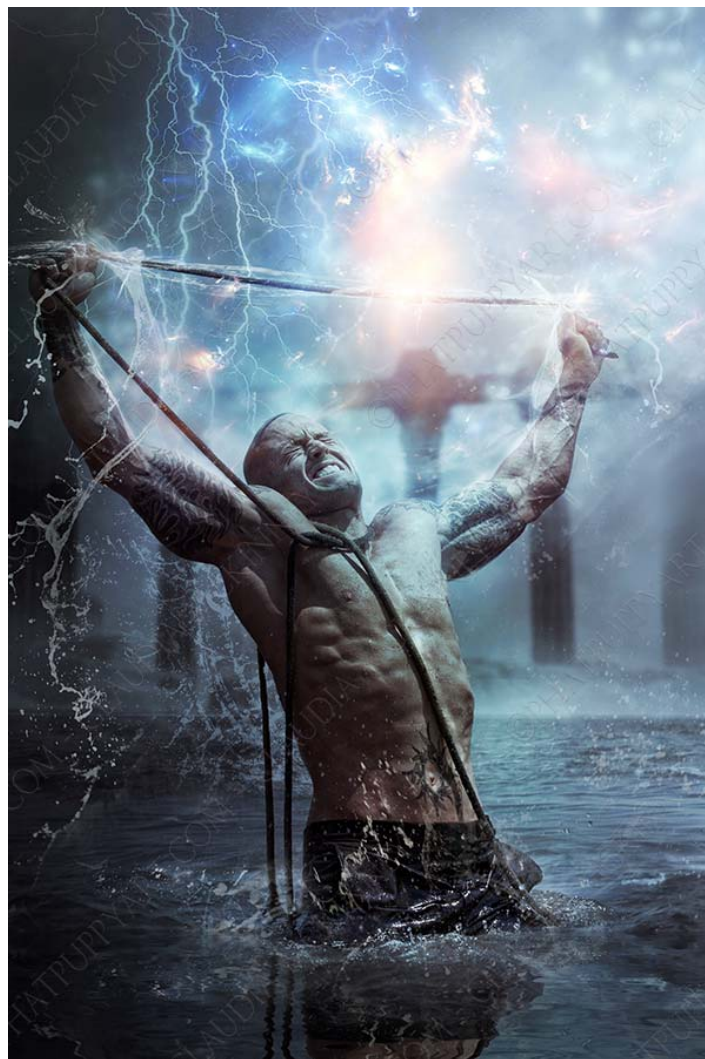
to really give it some thought. Take your time to find the right artist and the perfect tattoo as it will be on you for quite a long time!"

Now, let's talk about the purely visual reactions to the amazing work. I asked John if he felt the diversity of the artwork that adorns his body enhanced his presence, or simply makes him more memorable to people in some way? "To be honest Denyse I have to say both. It enhances my presence because I stand out from majority of the other models. People remember me as I am a bit different and like that. I have always liked being unique and having my own individual look. I often get this from people, "hey you're the guy with the tattoos." Or "aren't you the model/competitor with the most tattoos?" My tattoos make me more memorable and allow me to stand out a bit from the other competitors and my romance cover model brothers. All good," he concludes with a smile.



We next discussed the very thing that introduced John and I to each other, the art of book covers. John is going to be seen more and more on covers, his unique look and strong presence working in tandem with a superb photographer and creative artists who take those images and turn them into magic. Because John is an artist, too, I had to ask him: If you could choose your “dream cover” what would that image look like in your mind? “It is really funny that you ask me this Denyse because I just received the cover art piece from my artist I am signed on with, Claudia McKinney, which is my dream cover available for purchase right now. It is called “Break Free” and it has a fantasy theme to it in the water. It is one of the greatest pieces of art ever created of me!

Curious about that incredible piece of work? Here it is:



We then moved to the subject of how and what is going to be “written” forever on John’s body. Do you make conscious decisions about events or milestones that will be “inked” on your body in honor of special landmark events, or do you make the

decisions on the spur of the moment? “Never spur of the moment, Denyse. Every tattoo I have has been thought about for quite some time before I actually got it. Everything from what I want to the color and the exact placing of it on my body. It is going to be on there forever so I want it to be perfect.”

That makes sense. Do you ever do a “rough” design yourself? And, despite all the thought and care you clearly give this artistic process, have you ever wished any of the tattoos had come out different than the finished result you wear now? “I have never done a rough design but I always have what I want in mind and properly convey this to my artist. I actually love the way all of the tattoos look Denyse, they are all perfect and tell stories. Great memories associated with each one. They are all truly special to me.”

But, have you ever regretted any of the tattoos? “I haven’t as they all have special meaning and tell a story. Some public and some I keep private but they are all special to me.”

That was a good opportunity, so I pried further! Tell us about two that you’d feel comfortable sharing with us. “My oriental dragon half sleeve tattoo on my right arm is an amazing piece, It was free handed by one of the world’s best tattoo artists Mulysa Mayhem, It is so detailed! I am amazed to this day every time I look at it. I also love my nautical stars done by Matt Myrdal of Pino Bros. Ink in Cambridge, MA. He is one of the most talented artists the world over and along with owner Frank Pino Jr. Pino Bros. Ink is one of the best places on the planet to get inked!”



And, I know we all want to know if there are plans for more of the gorgeous inked art, so I asked, right? At this time, do you plan to have more tattoos done? “Yes, number twenty will be coming at some point and I know exactly what and where it’s going to go but for now it is my secret,” he revealed with the dazzling Quinlan smile.

You’re a big tease, Quinlan! “You know I love you Denyse! Sitting here with you doing this interview is awesome and I am honored to be here with such a talented writer as yourself!”

In conclusion, I was really curious about one more thing, so I asked: Is there any one tattoo that is, in your heart, the most special of them all? Like the wonderful, loving man he is, John had the perfect answer. "My oriental kanji symbol for 'Family' on the inside of my left wrist as it represents my three children. Being a good dad is very important to me and I love them all so much."

I'm sure they love and adore you, too, John. You're a very special person. Thank you so much for this wonderful and insightful interview. In closing, is there anything you'd like to talk about that we haven't discussed? Please feel free to add your closing remarks.

"I am a huge Denyse Bridger fan!"

Flattering, isn't he? I love him, too. He's a great guy, with warmth, and humour. And, oh yeah - he's REAL. What's not to love!



**For more info on John Quinlan, check out his wiki page, found here:**  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Quinlan\\_\(wrestler\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Quinlan_(wrestler))



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