The Incredible Bulk

September 1, 2008 By James Wortman

Christopher Bell's critically acclaimed documentary *Bigger, Stronger, Faster**—which hits DVD on September 30—tackles the steroid debate that permeates our sports, our films and our local gyms. Growing up idolizing Hulk Hogan, Sylvester Stallone and Arnold Schwarzenegger, Bell and his two brothers could hardly avoid what he calls an "explosion of ass-kicking in America" and its accompanying temptation to bulk up.

In Michael Moore-ish fashion, Bell—who disapproves of steroids despite his brothers' continued use—exposes their evils in his film. Yet he acknowledges that they may have benefits as well, and may even enhance the health of people suffering from chronic illnesses—including HIV.

Bell interviews Jeff Taylor, who, at the time of filming, had been living with HIV for 25 years. In 1992, Taylor says, he was down to just two T cells, had developed AIDS-related pneumonia and was close to death.

It was an experimental bodybuilding drug trial that pulled him from the brink. "I signed myself up, got a fairly high dose and responded amazingly," Taylor says in the film. "I gained 30 pounds in six weeks, and I gained 300 T cells." Now, that's performance enhancement.

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