

Revealing ‘Scotty and the Secret History of Hollywood’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on August 13, 2018 - 1:38pm

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Rating: **4.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – Any “secret history” inevitably reveals some totally human trait that somehow counters a delicately constructed facade. Show business is no stranger to those histories, and the new documentary “Scotty and the Secret History of Hollywood” is a doozy. Ex-Pimp to the Stars Scotty Bowers reveals all.

Another fascinating time element, that permeates the background of the somewhat sleazy reveals, is the secret history of post World War II America. Those who survived that meat grinder, both overseas and in the USA, often came out on the other side with a devil-may-care attitude... survivors will do that. But also, the “hicks from the sticks” got a taste of life beyond their borders, sometimes ending up with the fuzzy end of the lollipop, but still managing to scratch out an existence even while licking it. That is all encompassed in Scotty Bowers, an enigmatic sex procurer who dabbled in everything, including with some of the bold faced names of the Golden Age of Hollywood. We’re always deluding ourselves in thinking the past was better all around, yet everybody still had sex drives, and Scotty Bowers was more than accommodating.

This film is based on the book “Full Service,” and follows Scotty Bowers as he has somehow survived into his nineties. In the present day, he travels from property to property (mostly inherited) as he reminisces about his past – both about his life and the lives he had encountered – and both past and present equals a one-of-a-kind character. The present day Scotty is a hoarder, for example, and that seems as telling as the sexual exploits he describes.



Rainbow Connection: Bowers in 'Scotty and the Secret History of Hollywood'

Photo credit: Greenwich Entertainment

He came to Los Angeles and Hollywood via the small town, then Chicago, then participation in World War II, to a hope after the war to live larger than his destiny. His first job in L.A. was as a car repair man, and with the addition of a trailer in back of the service station, his other job became setting up sex encounters (both or all orientations). Soon he was “servicing” some big stars who would come to the pumps, which included some of the biggest names in Hollywood at the time.

Yeah, it's a “tell all” and yeah, I didn't know the specifics of Spencer Tracy and Katharine Hepburn's “affair,” beyond what Kate herself revealed. I did know that Spence was a guilty Catholic man who clung to a fraud of a marriage because of his devotion to the religion, and as revealed in the film that guilt was probably deeper than we'll ever know (and probably contributed to Spence's legendary alcoholism). That part of the tell-all had a touch of sadness to the reveal.

Scotty Bowers is a blunt individual, unencumbered by any filter when it comes to describing sexuality and his exploits (he was a subject of Dr. Kinsey). His background as a boy paved his way to pimping and the hustle, just because the door opened to him at an early age, and during the 1930s Depression a person had to be creative to survive. This is very interesting in the context of the film and our modern analysis of the effects of childhood, as an off-camera voice (likely director Matt Tyrnauer) speculates that his youthful dalliances may have affected him. The affable Bowers laughs it off, as he tries to find a place to sit down in his hoarder's nest.



The Good Soldier in 'Scotty and the Secret History of Hollywood'

Photo credit: Greenwich Entertainment

There is a lesson in the film (besides the various flavors of sex that the stars enjoyed). The so-called "legends" of the silver screen were actual people, with the same propensity for canoodling as all of us, and were trapped in an era in which gay coupling was done in dark alleys or trailers in gas stations. As is pointed out several times, Scotty Bowers provided a service for their needs, was completely discreet (he tells of it now because the subjects are long dead) and was a necessary companion to movie stars whose very careers were predicated on keep up facades.

Do the secrets revealed in the film alter my perspective on these icons of film? At this point in my life, hell no. In fact, it gave me a feeling of ennui that individuals – at any level of fame or infamy – had to hide their true selves behind the shield of the happy pimpdom of Scotty Bowers. Everybody deserves better.

"Scotty and the Secret History of Hollywood" continued its nationwide limited release in Chicago... at the Music Box Theatre, 3733 North Southport Avenue... on August 10th. See local listings for other theaters and show times. Directed by Matt Tyrnauer. Rated "R"



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