



Full Service: My Adventures in Hollywood and the Secret Sex Lives of the Stars

Scotty Bowers , Lionel Friedberg

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Newly discharged from the Marines after World War II, Scotty Bowers arrived in Hollywood in 1946. Young, charismatic, and strikingly handsome, he quickly caught the eye of many of the town's stars and starlets. He began sleeping with some himself, and connecting others with his coterie of young, attractive, and sexually free-spirited friends. His own lovers included Edith Piaf, Spencer Tracy, Vivien Leigh, Cary Grant, and the abdicated King of England Edward VIII, and he arranged tricks or otherwise crossed paths with Tennessee Williams, Charles Laughton, Vincent Price, Katharine Hepburn, Rita Hayworth, Errol Flynn, Gloria Swanson, Noël Coward, Mae West, James Dean, Rock Hudson and J. Edgar Hoover, to name but a few.

Full Service is not only a fascinating chronicle of Hollywood's sexual underground, but also exposes the hypocrisy of the major studios, who used actors to propagate a myth of a conformist, sexually innocent America knowing full well that their stars' personal lives differed dramatically from this family-friendly mold. As revelation-filled as Hollywood Babylon, *Full Service* provides a lost chapter in the history of the sexual revolution and is a testament to a man who provided sex, support, and affection to countless people.

Full Service: My Adventures in Hollywood and the Secret Sex Lives of the Stars Details

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From Reader Review Full Service: My Adventures in Hollywood and the Secret Sex Lives of the Stars for online ebook

Carolyn says

I only learned that this book and its author existed when I saw a trailer for an upcoming documentary about Scotty Bowers career as pimp and prostitute for some of the leading movie stars, directors, musicians, studio executives, etc. of the 1940's and 1950's and later. This is salacious, graphic material, but I read reviews beforehand and was aware of and prepared for its type of content. I recommend it to those who enjoy perusing the headlines in the most scandalous tabloids while in the supermarket lineup.

I am not sure whether to classify the book as non-fiction or fiction. A lot about the secret lives of these celebrities came out after their death, but not in such lurid and graphic detail. Much of it has the ring of truth. Names are freely given along with sexual acts and perversions in which Bowers claims to have observed or acts in which he participated. What I found most unbelievable was by the end of the book he was 88 and still active, happily married and working as a bartender, handyman and landscaper. He shows no regrets and rationalizes that his life was dedicated to bringing 'joy' to a multitude of people.

The book describes his life as a child and later as a Marine in the Pacific during WW2. It is not pleasant reading. Why did he wait until all the subjects had died to publish the book? Fear of lawsuits? He explains that all these celebrities were dear friends and he did not want to embarrass them or ruin their careers. During the time the studios held their stars to a strict moral code and had family friendly images built around their personal lives. They would lose their contract, their reputations and even some would end up in jail, Scotty believes, if he hadn't been such a 'good guy' by catering to their every desire or perversion.

He quit procuring for acquaintances during the AIDS scare in the 1980's. He is aged 95 at time of the documentary film. We will never know how much of his reminiscing is true, or if it is the exaggerated ramblings of an old man recalling his 'glory days'.

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Sketchbook says

Pimp-hustler Bowers goes the full monty in mean-spirited fantasy. Same ole names, nothing new. It's a ripoff of Cole-Noel-C Grant-K Hepburn bios. Dishonest junk fr publisher Grove/Atlantic. (Friend sent adv copy). Stick w Kenneth Anger. One validated story: Carol Channing's last hubby liked boys. But she's been blabbing this for years. Does anyone care? Not even Chan cares.

Adam Tschorn says

The street date of Scotty Bowers' "Full Service: My Adventures in Hollywood and the Secret Sex Lives of

the Stars," written with Lionel Friedberg, is Valentine's Day, but the eagerly anticipated memoir has been generating buzz for several weeks, and will most likely encounter a firestorm of criticism from some segments of the Hollywood set.

It offers the former Marine paratrooper, pump jockey and bartender's accounts of three decades of having sex with — or arranging others to have sex with — some of the biggest names of Hollywood's Golden Age — Cary Grant, Vincent Price, Edith Piaf, Spencer Tracy and the Duke of Windsor.

The title is a not-so-subtle reference to the job that was Bowers' entree into his career as a sexual "fixer," pumping gas at the Richfield station at 5777 Hollywood Blvd., where he began to connect former Marine Corps pals and other acquaintances with Hollywood elite looking for secretive sexual encounters — gay and straight — in an era where the studio system and the mores of the day kept a lid on sexual activity and orientation.

He says his first "trick" came in 1946, with actor Walter Pidgeon and milliner-to-the stars Jacques Potts, and other bold-faced names Bowers mentions along the way include composer Cole Porter, director George Cukor, Cary Grant and Randolph Scott, Katharine Hepburn and Vivien Leigh.

The initial impulse, of course, is to compare Bowers' allegations about his career with that of Heidi Fleiss, the Hollywood Madam, and though both pandered to the prurient interests of the entertainment industry, Bowers' fantastical story goes further.

When he wasn't crossing paths with the likes of FBI director J. Edgar Hoover and porn star John Holmes, Bowers writes, he acted as stud service for infertile couples in Colorado, assisted at least one Hollywood star in a custody battle and helped Alfred Kinsey research his book "Sexual Behavior in the Human Female," as well as connect Kinsey with former Egyptian ruler Farouk I and his legendary stash of pornography.

By the time Bowers has finished sharing anecdotes about fighting on the island of Iwo Jima in World War II and once assisting Beatles manager Brian Epstein (one of his tricks) in whisking the Fab Four out of the hands of groupies during an August 1964 visit to Los Angeles, he's been less than one degree away from so many people and events in popular culture one starts to wonder if "Forrest Hump" might have been a more appropriate title.

This doesn't mean that "Full Service" is an easy book to read. It isn't — for several reasons. Chief among them is the gnawing question about the book's veracity — especially given the fact that virtually all of the people he mentions in the book are long gone and unable to refute his account. (Asked about this in a recent phone interview, Bowers' response was: "Not only did I do all the things I said I did in the book, I did even more.")

The pacing of the book is a bit uneven in places, choppy in others, and full of purple prose throughout (it's unclear, for example, why an account of his childhood on the farm needed to include a sentence like: "As my fingers tugged on the cow's soft teats, her warm milk squirted into the pail.") and occasionally punctuated by a rhetorical elbow to the ribs. While it's easy to marvel at his sexual escapades, it's hard to forge any kind of emotional connection with Bowers, who comes across as well-endowed in the ego department as he suggests he is below the belt and who rattles off the names of his sexual partners with all the emotion of making a shopping list. He even refuses to label his own sexual orientation as straight, gay or bisexual.

And even those who consider themselves open-minded and not the least but prudish — gay or straight — may find some of the specific details are too much of an over share (such as some of British actor Charles

Laughton's alleged peccadilloes). Even more troubling — especially in light of the current allegations about teachers at the Miramonte Elementary School — is Bowers matter-of-fact account of his childhood activities, which included his introduction to sex by his adult male neighbor, having sex with not one but several Roman Catholic priests, and arranging a lesbian tryst between a 13-year-old classmate and his own grade school teacher.

If you're looking for a morality tale — a neat and tidy story arc in which Bowers reaches an epiphany or realizes the error of his ways — you'll be sorely disappointed. But if you're looking for an unvarnished account of the closeted sexual shenanigans of Hollywood's Golden Age — and a good trashy read at the same time — then "Full Service" is the full enchilada.

Verity says

[image error]

Dy-an says

I'm calling bullsh*t, Mr. Bowers.

1. There is no way that everyone who met you, liked you and wanted to do nasty things with you.
 2. I don't buy the line that you were never paid for setting up 'tricks'. No one does it for the love of the game. You's a pimp, sir!
 3. J. Edgar Hoover? Really? That doesn't strike you as funny.
 4. How convenient that everything was a BIG SECRET and all the corroborators are dead.
 5. There must be a whole new brand of syphilis with your name on it - The Bowers strain would have raged through Hollywood had this book been true.
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Tosh says

"Full Service" indeed. Scotty Bowers memoir is the not-so-secret of the sexual lives of the cinema famous and the great. Gossip is an important social function in the world, and "Full Service" is not afraid to go into that territory. And being a visitor, by reading this book, I find it really interesting. I am always fascinated with the image more than the truth. One of the reasons why I like the cinema is the fact that dreams are being projected on a screen - and i never really was (or is) concerned what is real or not real.

So with that in mind I have no reason to doubt Bowers tales in this book. I am more interested in another shadow world where desire leads to adventures. And what I got from this book is not the actual sex acts - plenty of that - but the fact that it was a world that was full of secrets - and secrets are very very seductive.

So one should dip into "Full Service" as not as if it was true or not (does that really matter) but the fact that one can go into Scotty Bowers world with a full appreciation of a life that was well-designed and in many ways beautiful.

Wendell says

This may not be the silliest book I've ever read, but it is without question the most pointless.

I had of course heard and read enough (so to say) fluff about Full Service to know that I was in for trash before I'd even cracked the covers. But there's trash and then there's rubbish. This is rubbish, especially in the British sense of the word.

Whether or not there is "truth" in Bowers' claims about the "secret sex lives of the stars" (and isn't that a phrase that just makes you know you're about to hear gospel?) is immaterial. There's no particular reason to disbelieve Bowers, but there's not the slightest reason to believe him either. Not one single paragraph in his book contains what any reasonable person could call the "ring of truth." Even when Bowers is describing people to whom he was supposedly very close (and to whom was he NOT very close, among the rich and famous?), his so-called memories betray all the intimacy of a Wikipedia entry. In other words, Bowers has nothing interesting or revealing to say about anyone; all his information is warmed-over and leftover.

To wit: Had you heard that J. Edgar Hoover liked to cross-dress? Well, Bowers was once at a party that Hoover attended and – guess what!?!?! – Hoover actually dressed up in drag. Try to imagine the serendipity. Had you read that John Holmes had both a massive dick and a massive drug problem and, late in his life, was implicated in the unsolved Wonderland murders? Yeah, so has Bowers. But he doesn't mind repeating this squib as though he actually possesses some information that didn't come from Google.

Particularly repellent is Bowers' discussion of Tennessee Williams, who supposedly wrote a tell-all play about Bowers' life but then, at Bowers' request, destroyed it (how convenient!); it is not only crass and feeble, it is blatantly cribbed from other people's biographies.

Attempts like these are merely pathetic. More than that, they reflect precisely what little someone in Bowers' position could logically be expected to know. Logically, that is, unless you're willing to believe that Bowers was bosom buddies with the glitterati, the Hollywood A-List, the wealthiest producers, and the biggest celebrities -- a group of individuals whom we can easily believe were dying, in the years of McCarthy, the Hays Code, and morals clauses, to confide deeply in gas station attendants and bartenders before folding them permanently into their swank and cliquish coteries.

But that is evidently what Bowers does want his audience to believe, a pretension that leads to many passages in which he asks the reader not only to suspend disbelief, but to murder any neuron that attempts to traffic in reason. Thus, we're meant to take as revealed light not only that Walter Pidgeon was a horny, middle-aged homo, but that he picked up Bowers (who, at the time, was a barely legal little piece of street hustler meat), took him to his mansion for sex, and immediately told him exactly who he was, including introducing him, by name, to another closeted H'wood celebrity. How much of a closet can it have been if Pidgeon blabbed his most carefully guarded secrets to some completely unknown boy whose five minutes after doing him?

Then, of course, there's the fact that everyone about whom Bowers writes is conveniently dead. I don't

mention this as any sort of allusion to the legalities of defamation, but simply to clarify a point: It's one thing to have the guts to make claims about people who are still around to say you're full of shit. It's quite another thing to write Full Service, which may just have defined a new genre: Necrophiliac Soft Porn Fan Fic.

I could go on, but just talking about Bowers makes me tired. I'll close by saying that it's difficult to know how much control Lionel Friedberg had over Bowers' writing, but the result of their collaboration is dreck: repetitive, dull, boilerplate reportage of the breathless, tedious sort one normally finds on the E! Network. Spoiler: Bowers' (and, evidently Friedberg's) favorite adverb is "happily." After reading the umpteenth sentence in which someone does something "happily," I could have murdered them both. Happily.

My meager consolation is that I borrowed this book from the library and never actually had to pay for it. But that doesn't mean, when I'd finished reading, that I didn't (let's say it with Bette) WIPE MY MOUTH!

George Ilsley says

Hard to imagine people who pick up such a memoir and then complain about the salacious details. The whole point is salacious details, people, and please don't bother pretending otherwise. Bowers presents himself as a sort of unpaid pimp, and it is perplexing why he bothered to do all that work for nothing. Perhaps he had legal advice concerning the need to gloss over certain details.

Having recently read an article about the death of Roman Novarro, and the lives of the hustlers (two brothers) who killed him, one finds some of the details in this volume to be not so improbable. The post-War years used to be very decadent, but no one talked about it and so most thought everything was very innocent. Now everything is talked about, and much less is swept under the carpet.

The strangest aspect here was the vitriol Bowers exhibited towards those few celebrities who somehow managed to not sleep with him. James Dean was a "prissy little queen" and so on.

All in all, I felt that there is still another stranger story which has not been told. I wished this had been a biography, with collaborating or contradictory views from other people, to flesh out the narrative.

Polly says

I like books about people who take lemons and make lemonade, and this is one of them. Scotty grew up in some hard circumstances during the Depression, and he was subjected to sexual abuse at a young age. That's the outsider's take on it, not Scotty's. Maybe a self-protection mechanism kicked in, but he found his own way to deal with things and didn't let it get him down. At least, that's how he presents it in the book. Who knows what he really thought deep down inside.

I was definitely intrigued by all the celebrity sexcapades outlined in the book. There were a few surprises as to who was gay or bisexual, but not a lot. I do believe it all happened. To others who reviewed the book and questioned why sometimes Scotty has a lot of details and sometimes he doesn't - gee, I'm 51 and I can remember some things in my past really clearly and others not so clearly. Get over it!

I'm not going to say anything more - go read it for yourself. If you're open minded and are a fan of the glory

days of Hollywood you'll love it!

Jim Morrissey says

I don't know how I made it through this. Well, I do. There was a lot of skimming. I don't buy half of it, not because I don't think Hollywood hired lots of call boys and girls, etc. but because his story seems strange and fabricated. I suppose it's possible, but even if it were I find it strange he never accepted money for hooking stars up with their little dalliances. I would venture this is the musings of an old man blowing his stories out of proportion; and it's HORRIBLY written at that. He tells us about 50 times how he was a great sexually liberated guy. Over and over. Also I don't buy he just helped priests out with sex because he thought it was natural and fine when he was under 12.

Melanie Baker says

Can't entirely pin down whether it was the tone/style, all the people name-dropped, or the salaciousness of it all, but the book leaves you inclined not to believe a word of it. And there are just too many things that make no sense in the grand scale of culture, society, and class. So that either means that it's complete bullshit, or that the truth is even crazier than he tells it.

Has Hollywood zealously guarded secrets over the years? Of course. Has it been taboo to be openly gay, particularly as public icon? (Oddly, in a creative industry that attracts arguably more gay people than others.) Sure. But even with those foundational truths, the book didn't work for me.

I found the faux coyness the most irritating, where he'd dance around what he claimed two people (or more) did together, then in the next paragraph come out with thoroughly explicit language.

Anyway, the book got a fair bit of buzz when it came out, unsurprisingly. There're a lot of pretty big claims in it. Bowers isn't dead (yet), but all but one of the people mentioned in the book are, so not like anyone featured is going to comment.

Kendra Bean says

I have a difficult time believing that Bowers was able to remember details of all of these supposed "tricks" without having kept note of them somewhere. I also have a very hard time believing he was "great friends" with all of these famous people. But regardless of whether the people he's outed we're actually gay/bi/liked hookups with a gas station attendant, the book is actually quite boring. A basic formula is used throughout:

1. Wikipediaesque potted biography of famous person
2. A couple of sentences about that person's *shocking* sexual proclivities
3. A declaration that Bowers and said celebrity were "good friends" or "great pals"

I've read much better smut elsewhere.

Jim says

Ick. Just ick. I suppose I deserved this. When I signed this out of the library I thought I was getting a general gossip account...you know, something along the line of "guess who's gay" or "guess which star had an affair with her butler". What I got instead is an all too graphic account of the sexual shenanigans of the author and people he has claimed to have whored or pimped for over the course of six or seven decades.

Bowers was molested by a friend's father at an early age. He enjoyed the experience so much he went back for more and eventually started whoring for pennies for clergy and other customers. I mean pennies literally because he remarked that it was a high point if he got as much as a dollar. Eventually he joined the Marines and after his discharge at the end of the war he got employment pumping gas at a Hollywood gas station. While thus employed he accepted an old queen's offer of twenty bucks for a bit of noggin and the die was cast. Bowers started tricking himself and other ex-Marines who were hanging around the gas station...made me look at Marines in a new way, I can tell you.

Because he was so good at providing specific "types" for his contacts, Bowers was able to befriend many of Hollywood's elite. Being bisexual, he bedded both males and females, and he doesn't mind telling you which ones. I'm not going to blindly accept everything he says as gospel, necessarily, because he didn't come out with his tell-all until almost everyone involved was dead. Additionally, much of what he says was common knowledge, or thought to be common knowledge. We all knew Rock Hudson was gay, and suspected Cary Grant and Randolph Scott of being involved, and who didn't suspect Hoover of being a cross-dresser? Still, I have no reason to disbelieve any of it.

I found the book way too graphic for my taste. The only physical contact I want with another man doesn't extend past firm handshake, and Bowers goes way past that in his account. If you want to know which celebrity liked turd sandwiches or which one wanted an uncircumcised male who hadn't washed for a while, this book is for you.

Matters of delicacy aside, I was conflicted with Bowers. I think a person's sexuality is their own business....unless they are in a committed relationship. Bowers was married but was constantly unfaithful. He would even clamber aboard a friend's wife with no compunction whatsoever. Furthermore, I also feel that sexual encounters are a personal matter shared by two people, not something to be gloated about. On the other hand, Bowers is comfortable with his sexuality and probably doesn't even have the feeling that anything he has done is wrong. He even seems grateful for the sexual education he received at the hands of adults while still a boy.

We can take this as a warning to be careful of whom we choose to be intimate with, and a reminder that you can never really trust anyone.

I was so glad that John Wayne and Clint Eastwood did not appear in this book.

Tinamarie Hunter says

I hated this book so much. I was only able to force myself through half of it. I felt like I was reading the

trashiest, cattiest tabloid out there, only it was about stars of the 1950's.

Scotty Bowers goes on and on about how awful someone was but then ends it with "but we were very good friends and remained so for years." Uh, Scotty, every Southern girl knows that passive aggressive trick for insulting someone.

The worst part however, was that is justified, even promoted child prostitution.

This book deeply offended and disgusted me. Awful. Awful. Awful. I cannot say it enough.

Save the money and buy a Star or some other trash like that. Or read it for free while getting your hair done.

Brie says

I will not try and figure out if the author was exploited as a child. He seems to have made peace with his childhood so I will accept that even if it makes me sad to read about the adults using him like they did.

Now that I have that out of the way, I won't try and say I believe all he has talked about in the book. There is a lot that rings true...usually the stories that are more fleshed out and less "We did this and that and I don't remember when". Still it is an interesting book about a guy who made his own way in life and isn't ashamed to be frank about his sexual exploits. He is blunt in language and uses words to describe acts and people that were used at the period of time they happened. I actually grew to like him as a person because of this...this frankness and sense of fun he had...despite him being a paid sex object. I was very happy to hear that he was settled in life and enjoying his later years with a woman he loves, a house he adored, and a dog he loves. After the life he led...he really deserves some calm and happiness in his later years.

This is definitely not the book for people who don't like frankness about sex, sex when still considered a child, explicit descriptions of sex, or speculations about famous people. If that stuff turns your stomach avoid this book. If you like to listen to older people tell stories from their lives, real or made up, and are not squeamish about sex, then you may enjoy this book. I enjoyed it despite sections that made me sad for the boy he was and parts that made me side-eye what was written as truth but may not be. Everyone has a story and they all should be allowed to tell it.
