

Write Your Life

A micro memoir writing project

What was your first taste of being unsupervised in the adult world? When did you first feel out on your own?

Coming of Age with Goldfinger

Mrs. Young dropped us off a block from the State theater in Bay City, in summer 1965. We were going to see the movie “Goldfinger.” I would be 13 years old in the fall. This adventure, on a sunny Saturday afternoon, was about many things. It was about independence, going somewhere without an adult watching over us. It was also a peek into the sensual and exciting world of spies. In a modest sense, tame by today’s standards, Bond movies were sexy. Goldfinger was the third installment. My father was not a fan, because Bond was a seductive character who drank Martinis and because of the bedroom scenes.

It was our second outing together, me and Bob Young and Ron Fritz. Earlier that summer we had gone to the demolition derby at the Midland County Fairgrounds. That evening, while cars roared around the oval racetrack bashing into each other, we sat in the stands lighting and smoking cigarettes. When my dad picked us up that night as it was getting dark, he must have smelled us.

The State was old style, with the box office window outside below the big marquis, now showing GOLDFINGER. The lobby was ornate, with lots of gold details, shiny framed posters of films, and plush purple curtains. The concession workers and ushers wore heavy red jackets with epaulets. Inside, when we were seated, when the Bond theme song started, with the pistol shots and dancing women cavorting on screen, we dug into our popcorn. The film took us to Miami, to Switzerland, to Fort Knox. There were speedboats and airplanes. There was a henchman named Odd Job. And a wild new weapon called a laser beam.

And the film was sexy. Bond’s sidekick was a babe named Pussy Galore. I wonder now how she was addressed. “Miss Galore, we have your room ready.” “Would hand me my gun, Pussy?”

I think if he had known about Miss Galore, my father probably wouldn’t have let me see the movie. For a small-town Midwestern kid, raised in the Methodist Church, it was transgressive. And thrilling.