



## Sir Roger Moore

Last week Roger Moore died aged 89. We loved his warm, moving Letter to My Younger Self from 2014. As a tribute to a much-loved icon, we're rerunning it

**A**t 16 I'd been working for six months already, for a company which made instructional animated films for the army and air force. My job was tracing illustrations on a light box. I loved it but due to a misunderstanding when I was collecting film from a laboratory my services were no longer required. Then I was unemployed so I went to the swimming pool a lot.

**The war was still going on when I was a teenager, which was absolutely terrible.** I remember

coming home one day and my mum had just found out that her brother, one of her favourite people in her life, had been killed in Italy. He was a regular soldier who had been blown up when one of his platoon stood on a mine. But apart from that I was a very happy and carefree teenager. I had no responsibilities.

**I had a wonderful relationship with my parents.** I was an only child, terribly spoiled. I didn't have to share, I didn't have to wear my sister's dresses. I used to laughingly say they only had one child because they reached perfection on their first try so they didn't have to try again. But actually, I must have been a large baby who kicked a lot because after I was born my mother was advised not to carry another child... So she immediately dropped me on the floor.

**I had never thought about acting but I did always enjoy clowning around.** I was often chosen to read poetry and stories aloud in class. But my father was in the police, his job was to draw the accident scenes for court evidence. He worked

mainly at home and if the sun was shining he would take me swimming instead of working. So if anyone ever asked me about my career plans I said I wanted to be a policeman like my father.

**If I could talk to the 16-year-old Roger I'd say, be prepared to put up with criticism.** Be prepared to be part of an industry where the vast majority are out of work. Save your money. Continue to smile. Be well-mannered. And just love it.

**The teenage me would be surprised that I was successful.** Of course he dreamed of it but he wouldn't have worried if it hadn't happened. I remember when I had enough for either five cigarettes or to get the bus. I'd have to walk all the way to London or I'd be sitting on the bus regretting that I didn't have a cigarette. So when it finally came to a time when I could afford both I'd sit on the top deck wafting a cigarette around, making a great show of reading my lines so that everyone could see I was an actor.

**Looking back, I've been very lucky.** I remember being in New York, I'd gone there without a permit – and in less than a week I had a job on a live television play. Then Hollywood beckoned and I had to decide which film studio in America I had to go under contract to. It was sort of ridiculous. I was about 26.

**I wasn't an Albert Finney or a Tom Courtenay.** I didn't have their natural talent, I had to work quite hard at acting. My life's been alright but people like that get to play wonderful parts. I spent my life playing heroes because I looked like one. Practically ever thing I've been offered didn't require much beyond looking like me. I would love to have played a real baddie.

**Ageing has never bothered me.** My wife loves me and my children love me so that's alright. I count my remaining hairs and say oh, they're still here. It sounds like Michael Caine's story about the man with three hairs who goes to the barber's and asks for a shampoo and set. The barber asks him which side he parts it on and he says the left. But a hair falls out and the barber says, what shall I do sir, and the man says, part it in the middle. Then another hair falls out and the barber says, what shall I do now? And the man says, um... just leave it ruffled.

**I don't like watching my old films.** I have a great ego and don't like to be reminded I'm not as good as I think I am. And I think 'damn' when I see myself in a film doing something active, running up stairs, and I can't do it any more. I've never sat down and watched a whole James Bond film.

**My lovely wife, who is Swedish, didn't see a lot of my films before she met me.** She had seen James Bond because the American ambassador's wife in Copenhagen invited her to a private screening. But

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Clockwise from top left: Roger Moore with his wife Kristina 'Kiki' Tholstrup; as aristocratic Lord Sinclair in *The Persuaders!*; *The Man with the Golden Gun*, Kiki's favourite Bond film starring hubby; Michael Caine tells Roger Moore the one about the man with three hairs

that was *Dr No*. So she knew Sean Connery was James Bond. But not me. Her favourite Bond with me in it... She's never said. She's across the room, I'll ask her... She says the one where I have the karate thing. I think she means *The Man with the Golden Gun*. Yes, I thoroughly enjoyed doing that. The two ladies – Maud Adams and Britt Ekland – strangely enough, I found very sweet.

**I think there are times when good luck comes along and things just start to happen.** You have to recognise those moments when they come and use them. I do go into my shell sometimes. I loathe arguments. When you lose your temper you've lost the argument generally. I always tell people, listen to others, weigh things up, take good advice and reject that which you don't think will do you any good whatsoever. Have I been good at following that advice? Not really. I just keep going. How does the song go... [sings] Keep right on till the end of the road.

Sir Roger Moore, 1927-2017

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