

## MY FIRST REAL CAMERA: 1955

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Here is a photo of my first serious camera, the Kodak Retina 2a, a little rangefinder. This was in 1955. It was loaned to me by my father for a trip around the country I was to take along with a busload of kids. He very carefully showed me how to use it, along with a light meter, and a set of close-up lenses, all picture here.

My dad was an amateur photographer, but a very good one. I was gone for six weeks. When I came back and the film was developed, dad looked at the color slides. His eyes popped out. He could not believe how well I did at my first photo attempt. Actually I just followed his instructions to the letter. But, unknown to me at the time, apparently I had an eye for photography. After all, it was just the way I saw things. I had no idea.

Anyway, that was perhaps one of the few times (perhaps the only time) that I really impressed my father, who was a comptroller of this or that. He was also impressed that I spent all my allowance money (for the trip) on more rolls of film. After that I went way alternative and that impressed dad not at all.

So here is my little Kodak Retina 2a that my brother Stephen dug out of his basement yesterday. He apparently ended up with it after my parent's passing. It is very dirty, but is still the tiny gem that it was at the time.

And here are a few of the photos I took on that trip so long ago, including one of a young me in snake heaven. I was a naturalist from the age of six years onward, and later became somewhat of an expert herpetologist, specializing in salamanders, in particular the Ambysomids. I also developed a method for determining the age of salamanders by examining growth rings in the thin bones of the skull, particularly the parasphenoid. Up until then, length of life was guessed at by measuring the length of the salamander. My method was more accurate, at least in temperate climates.

Probably more than you want to know, but there it is.



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My original Kodak Retina 2a.



Another close-up shot.



Sample of my first close-up photography.



I was moody even then.



Mormon Tabernacle. I am not a Mormon, but was passing through Salt Lake City.



Here I am, about 15-years old, with a long friend. This was when I took these photos.