

Falk's 'Columbo' solved 69 murders

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Dear Ken: Actor Peter Falk of "Columbo" fame died recently? What were some of the movies that he made? How many episodes did he make of "Columbo"?

Falk, who died June 23 at 83, made more than 40 films from 1959 to 2008. Twice he was nominated for Oscars, and he earned five Emmy Awards. Among his movie credits are "Murder, Inc.," "Pocketful of Miracles," "Robin and the Seven Hoods," "The Great Race," "Anzio," "The Brink's Job," "The Cheap Detective," "The In-Laws," "The Princess Bride" and "The Thing About My Folks." He made 69 "Columbo" TV movies. Just one more thing, he was a master of his craft.

Dear Ken: I see where there is now a "Smurfs" movie. Who did the voice of Smurfette in the Saturday morning TV series and who does her voice in the movie?

Lucille Bliss, 95, supplied the voice of Smurfette for the TV series. Among dozens of other characters, she was the voice of Crusader Rabbit, the star of the first made-for-television cartoon. Katy Perry voices Smurfette in the new movie.

Dear Ken: Whatever happened to Johnny Crawford, who played Chuck Connors' son on "The Rifleman"?

Crawford, 65, who was one of the original Mouseketeers on Walt Disney's "The Mickey Mouse Club," has been the vocalist and band leader of the Johnny Crawford Orchestra since 1992. His group performs vintage dance music and released its first album, "Sweepin' the Clouds Away," in 2008. He has said of his working with Connors, who played his TV dad, "Well, it was a great childhood, and he was bigger-than-life, a wonderful guy, very intelligent and a big influence on me, and a great supporter, too. He was always interested in what I was doing and ready to give me advice or help me and he would call me out of the blue, and I really miss him. He left us in '92, and it's still a shock to me to think that he's not around because he had so much energy and loved life and loved people, and he was 'The Rifleman.' He was that and a lot more."

Dear Ken: When and where were Eskimo Pies were created?

The U.S.A.'s first chocolate-covered ice cream bar was concocted by Christian K. Nelson at his home lab in Onawa, Iowa, in 1920. The inspiration came one day while he worked at a confectionary shop, and a boy came in wanting ice cream, but then changed his mind and purchased a chocolate bar. Nelson asked him why he didn't just buy one of each.

The youth answered, "Sure I know. I want 'em both, but I only got a nickel." That caused Nelson to work on a formula would allow melted chocolate to stick to frozen ice cream. Once he did that he sold his "I-Scream Bars" at a local picnic and discovered he had a hit. He went into a partnership with a chocolate maker, Russell Stover, in 1921, and they changed the name to Eskimo Pie. A year later Eskimo Pies were selling like cold cakes to the tune of a million a day. Stover soon sold his share of the company and then created Russell Stover Candies.

If you have a trivia question about actors, singers, movies, TV shows or pop culture, e-mail your query to Ken Beck at kbtag2@gmail.com

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