

McAvoy found 'Arthur' unbearably nice

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Dear Ken: Please share some background on James McAvoy, who is the voice of Arthur in "Arthur Christmas."

Scottish actor McAvoy, 32, grew up with his grandparents. His grandfather was a butcher, and McAvoy worked at a bakery as a teenager. He appeared in his first film at 15 and then studied at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. He was in an episode of "Band of Brothers" and then began working steadily in British films and TV shows. His film credits in the past seven years include "Wimbledon," "The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe," "The Last King of Scotland," "Wanted," "The Last Station" and "X-Men: First Class." He was also the voice of Gnomeo in "Gnomeo & Juliet." He is married to actress Anne-Marie Duff and they have a young son. As for voicing Arthur, McAvoy says, "It was difficult to keep up such an unwavering enthusiasm and high levels of anxiety at the same time. He's so nice. He's unbearably nice. (Director) Sarah Smith's note to me was, 'Keep making him nicer! Smile more!' I said, 'Isn't that going to get really annoying?' So yes, that was quite difficult for me to make him so nice. But, I love Christmas. I never used to. I didn't hate it, but I could take it or leave it. But, as I got to the age of 25 or 26, Christmas became quite a big deal, and I love it now. I love the food, and I love sharing time with people."

Dear Ken: What other shows has Emily VanCamp of "Revenge" been in?

Canadian-born VanCamp, 24, starred as Amy Abbott in "Everwood" and played Rebecca Harper in "Brothers & Sisters." She made her TV debut age 13 in an episode of "Are You Afraid of the Dark?" She also played a young Jackie in the TV movie "Jackie Bouvier Kennedy Onassis" and was in the films "Carriers" and "Black Irish." This past spring she starred in a Hallmark Hall of Fame movie, "Beyond the Blackboard."

Dear Ken: I just saw John Wayne's great cattle drive western "Red River." Where was it filmed?

The 1948 movie, which followed cowboys driving a herd of longhorns to Missouri along the Chisholm Trail, was shot in Arizona and Mexico. Director Howard Hawks used more than 9,000 steers, and the 500 actors and extras were garbed in duplicate authentic costumes, thus the original \$3 million budget shot nearly \$1 million over but the attention to details paid off. This is also the only movie that father and son, Harry Carey and Harry Carey Jr., made together. The senior Carey was idolized by John Wayne when he was a boy, and Duke considered Carey the greatest western actor of all time.

Dear Ken: When did Allen Funt and Durward Kirby of "Candid Camera" fame die?

Funt died in 1999 at age 84 from complications following a stroke he suffered in 1993. Kirby died in 2000 at 88 of congestive heart failure.

If you have a trivia question about actors, singers, movies, TV shows or pop culture, e-mail your query to Ken Beck at [This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it](#)

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