

= Peter Ostrum =

Peter Gardner Ostrum (/ ˈpiːtər ˈoʊstrəm / ;) (born November 1957) is an American former child actor whose only film role was as Charlie Bucket in the 1971 motion picture Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory .

A native of Cleveland , Ostrum was 12 years old when selected by talent agents for Willy Wonka . Though he enjoyed the experience of shooting the film , he opted not to sign a three @-@ film contract when it was over . After eschewing a career in film and theatre , Ostrum became reluctant to speak about his one starring role . In 1990 , he began an annual tradition of speaking to schoolchildren about the film , and he became a subject of interest again when 2005 's Charlie and the Chocolate Factory was released in theaters .

Ostrum became interested in horses when he returned from shooting Willy Wonka , and was particularly influenced by the veterinarian that tended to them . Receiving his Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine from Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine in 1984 , Ostrum now practices and lives in Lowville , New York , with his wife Loretta (née Lepkowski) , and two children : his son Leif and daughter Helenka .

= = Acting career = =

Ostrum was in the sixth grade and performing at the Cleveland Play House children 's theatre , when he was noticed by talent agents who were searching nationwide for the actor to portray Charlie Bucket in Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory . The agents took Polaroid photos of Ostrum and recorded him reading from the original novel , then returned to New York . Two months later Ostrum was called to New York for a screen test where he sang " My Country , ' Tis of Thee " , and a month after that he was contacted and given ten days to prepare to leave for filming .

In 2000 , Ostrum recalled that shooting Willy Wonka in Munich was " sort of like being an exchange student for five months " . Fond memories of his five months in West Germany included watching the construction of Olympiapark , Munich , for the 1972 Summer Olympics , and working with Gene Wilder and Jack Albertson . Though in his audition he had been assured that his singing would probably be cut and dubbed , it was Ostrum 's own singing voice that made it to the screen ? albeit significantly cut . In a 2011 interview , Ostrum told the story of how director Mel Stuart gave him a clapperboard from the film , and then forgot he had done so ; it is Ostrum 's only souvenir from the set . After he finished shooting Willy Wonka , the then 13 @-@ year @-@ old Ostrum declined the offer of a three @-@ film contract , later recalling that " [e] verybody thinks that acting is such a glamorous profession , but it 's a difficult profession . "

= = = Lasting effect = = =

In his senior year , Ostrum was involved in film class and , at the interest of one of his instructors , looked back into theatre and acting . After auditioning for , but not landing , several roles (including Equus on Broadway) , Ostrum decided not to pursue it further . After putting his short film career behind him , Ostrum declined reporters and interviews , preferring not to speak on the subject ; " I wanted people to judge me on who I was , not what I ? d done " . For some time , Ostrum even lied and told people that his brother , and not he , had starred in the film . It took Ostrum years after moving to Lowville before he told anybody there about his one @-@ time stardom ; even his wife Loretta did not know about his role until he warned her about it just before she met his mother .

In 1990 , he was invited to speak to students at Lowville Academy by teacher Carol Reed , and has since spoken to students there once a year ? on the last day of school , as a special treat ? about his experience in the film Willy Wonka as well as his work in veterinary medicine . About the film , the students chiefly ask about the special effects , and Ostrum describes to them " what happened to Veruca , how did Violet blow up like a blueberry , how did Charlie fly with Grandpa Joe , all those types of questions . " Ostrum has been called " the most famous man in Lowville " , where the local video rental shop has twice worn out its VHS copy of Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory .

In October 2000 , Ostrum and some of his co @-@ stars from the film were scheduled to record an audio commentary for a special edition DVD .

In the run @-@ up to the release of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory in 2005 , Ostrum garnered a spate of attention that included seeing the film in New York City with NPR as well as being included in VH1 's list of " 100 Greatest Kid Stars " (placing 78th) . On the new film , Ostrum quoted fellow Wonka actor Julie Dawn Cole , saying that " It 's sort of like going back to a house that you once lived in and it 's been redecorated . " Ultimately , the media attention was so pervasive that Ostrum stopped answering his phone , and requested " please , no more interviews . "

In January 2009 , Ostrum teamed up with Dunkin ' Donuts to hand out free rides on the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) at South Station in Boston , Massachusetts ; Ostrum 's participation connected the MBTA 's CharlieCards he was handing out with his portrayal of Charlie Bucket in Willy Wonka . The promotion also gave out one " golden ticket " , worth unlimited rides on MBTA and unlimited Dunkin ' Donuts coffee for 2009 .

In a 2010 interview , Wonka co @-@ star Denise Nickerson (Violet Beauregarde) revealed that Ostrum had agreed to join her and Paris Themmen (Wonka 's Mike Teevee) for a reunion commemorating the 40th anniversary of the film 's release in 2011 .

= = Veterinary career = =

Soon after Ostrum returned home from filming Willy Wonka , his family acquired a horse ; while the teenaged Ostrum was interested in the horse , it was the animal 's veterinarian that left a lasting impression on him . Taking a hiatus from school between high school and college , Ostrum groomed horses and worked at the Delaware Equine Center in Pennsylvania . Ostrum contemplated a return to Hollywood , and even visited California for a week to " test the waters " there . He ultimately decided to pursue a degree in veterinary medicine instead , feeling that he would forever berate himself if he didn 't . In 1984 , Peter Ostrum received his Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine from Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine .

As of November 2015 , Dr. Ostrum worked out of the Countryside Veterinary Clinic in Lowville , New York , where he works mainly with horses and cows . He has taken part in the video series Veterinarians on Call , funded by Pfizer , highlighting the work of large animal veterinarians .