

Title:

Growing Up With Erik Estrada

Word Count:

413

Summary:

This article gives a brief history into one of Americas most popular tv show characters.

Keywords:

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Article Body:

Erik Estrada was born in 1949 in East Harlem, Manhattan and is of Puerto Rican descent. Although he became popular later on for Spanish language telenovelas, he will always be most well known for his lead role in the television series CHiPs. Estrada played Officer Frank Poncherello, a California Highway Patrolman, hence the shows name CHiPs.

Erik Estrada made his film debut in 1970s The Cross and the Switchblade which was followed by a short, but moderately successful film career for him. Estradas film highlights are what landed him the leading role in the hit TV show CHiPs. He signed on to the show at the very beginning in 1977 and remained the star until the end of its final season in 1983. As a result of his newly discovered mainstream fame, he quickly became a teen idol, appearing on the cover of a variety of publications. By the second season of CHiPs, it had quickly claimed its spot among the top watched 70s TV shows.

CHiPs had an idea for a two part episode in the second season that would require some off camera work for Estrada. He began very strict, regimented martial arts training with Frank Argelander. Argelander was a highly skilled instructor in SeishinDo Kenpo, an American martial art system of self defense. Estrada and Argelander even appeared on the cover of Fighting Stars Magazine together that same year. The publication was a widely distributed fighting magazine and that issue featured an article of Erik Estrada and Frank Argelander discussing their training regimen.

The year of 1979 brought some unfortunate fortune to the life of Erik Estrada when he was seriously injured in a stunt on the set of the CHiPs TV show. While filming a scene on set he was thrown from a 900 pound motorcycle and broke both

wrists in addition to fracturing several of his ribs. However, later that year things started to look up again for Estrada when he was voted one of People magazines 10 Sexiest Bachelors in the World. He was even awarded the coveted spot on the cover of the November issue.

In 1981 Estrada had a salary dispute with the network executives which ultimately landed him on a hiatus from the series. Although he was replaced by Olympic medalist Bruce Jenner for a few episodes, his absence proved to be only temporary when he returned later that season. The CHiPs TV show was eventually cancelled in 1983, but Erik Estrada has remained a prominent figure in the media even today.