

# 'Just one more thing' about Peter Falk

Actor Peter Falk, famous for playing Lieutenant Columbo on television, died last Thursday after a long illness. Silver Springs resident George Koblasa has fond memories of working with Falk on 13 made-for-television movies starring in 1989.

Koblasa, a director of photography and member of the American Society of Cinematographers, has worked on countless movies and commercials. He gave an interview to the International Photographer Magazine in 1995 about working with Falk and gushed about his professionalism.

In an interview Friday, Koblasa told The Park Record he recalls Falk being incredibly considerate on set.

"He was a remarkable, remarkable individual. He was concerned about the wel-

fare of the crew and that they were always taken care of," he said. "He was complimentary to everyone's work on the set."

By 1989, Falk was the executive producer of two-hour "movies of the week" featuring the Columbo character. Koblasa was hired on a contract basis, but Falk liked his work enough to ask him to return off-and-on for five years.

Falk was an "actor's actor," he said.

"I've never met anybody so committed to trying to communicate with the other actor. The connection is evident on screen. He was a natural. It was a joy to be working with him."

Koblasa, a native of the Czech Republic, has a unique connection with Falk, he said, because Falk was part Czech.

As executive producer, Falk was intimately involved in every aspect of pre-production and filming. He wanted to see the wardrobes picked out and wrote many of the scripts himself. But Koblasa said Falk always let him do his job. It took five or six weeks to prepare for and film the one two-hour movie and the cast typically worked 12 hours a day until filming was complete. One day they worked around the clock trying to finish by a deadline.

"He was very much into the show and very involved. Even when not in character he would wander around," he said. "You could see him rehearsing... but because of his poor vision he would sometimes trip over the cables."

Falk's eye was surgically removed as a small child and

replaced with a glass eye.

Because his career was full of variety, Koblasa said Falk was the only actor he worked with on a repeat basis. That gave him a special appreciation for the complete creation of the character Falk performed, he said.

A very diverse actor, Falk succeeded in making people fall in love with the quirks of Columbo like the cigar, funky trench coat and bumbling manner while still occasionally playing other roles, Koblasa said.

— Andrew Kirk

IMAGE COURTESY OF GEORGE KOBLASA

Falk signed a portrait of himself for George Koblasa, noting their mutual roots in the Czech Republic. Koblasa directed filming of Columbo in 13 television movies.

