

Ten TV trivia tidbits we bet you didn't know

By Melissa Hank

We've got dirt on secrets from 'Melrose Place', 'Seinfeld', 'Sex and the City', 'Frasier', 'The X-Files' and more



Who was the inspiration behind Michael Richards' Kramer on 'Seinfeld'?

OK, I have a confession to make: I'm addicted to *Beverly Hills, 90210* repeats on TVtropolis. I know, I know. Don't judge me.

In fact, I like to think of myself as superior vessel of *90210* trivia – a Brenda 'n' Brandon buff, if you will. An Andrea Zuckerman zealot, a Kelly Taylor truth-hound, a Donna Martin maniac, even.

But my connoisseur status was seriously challenged when I first saw *Tube Tales*, a neat little documentary trivia show airing Mondays at 7 p.m. ET/PT on TVtropolis.

Turns out, there are things about *BH* even I didn't know (shocking, right?). And, I bet you'll be intrigued to discover tasty morsels of little-known truth behind your favourite series of yesterdecade too.

Below, creative producer Dianna Bodnar dishes on 10 classic series featured on *Tube Tales*' menu. Bon appetit!

1. FRASIER

"*Frasier* was originally going to be set in Denver, not Seattle. It's weird, because Seattle is such a huge part of that show. We interview the creator, Peter Casey. Plus, the production designer, Roy Christopher, shows off the show's set model and reveals what the inspiration for his Emmy-winning design was."

Bonus trivia: Kelsey Grammer was asked to shave the beard he had in the last season of *Cheers* because producers felt he wouldn't look young enough to play John Mahoney's son.

2. BEVERLY HILLS, 90210

"What a great show! We got to meet the real high school friends behind that famous love triangle between Kelly, Brenda and Dylan."

Bonus trivia: The characters' school, "West Beverly", is completely fictional. Beverly Hills High School would not allow the series to use its name.

3. MELROSE PLACE

"There's a fantastic story about the subversive art that was placed in *Melrose Place*. It was done by a group of conceptual artists to create controversial subliminal messages. One of the people we interviewed for that was producer Carol Mendelsohn, who is now a show runner for *CSI*."

Bonus trivia: When *Melrose Place* ended, producers and studio executives sold bottles of water from the famous swimming pool on eBay.

4. SEX AND THE CITY

"We've got a couple segments on *Sex and the City*. You'll see the real locations. But also, the four girls were meant to represent certain areas in Manhattan. And we all love New York!"

Bonus trivia: Apparently, the ballerina tutu that Sarah Jessica Parker wears in the opening credits cost only \$5 from a vintage store.

5. MALCOLM IN THE MIDDLE

"That show was actually all inspired by creator Linwood Boomer's life. He was the model for Malcolm, and his crazy family was all based on real life."

Bonus trivia: Frankie Muniz, who played Malcolm, has since traded his acting career for racing cars. This year, he drove in the Champ Car World Series and the Las Vegas Grand Prix.

6. SEINFELD

"We do a couple episodes on *Seinfeld* – one is based on the real Kramer, Kenny Kramer. Another is based on the real Soup Nazi. That poor guy! After that nickname was coined, he got really upset about it. People kept coming into his soup store and calling him that. The story is true – he actually had those specific rules for waiting in line, stepping to the right and not asking questions."

Bonus trivia: Elaine was the only one of the four main characters who wasn't in the pilot. Julia Louis Dreyfus didn't even know about the pilot until the DVD release. She still hasn't seen it.

7. THE SIMPSONS

"We've got the real Krusty the Clown from *The Simpsons* – he was modeled on a real person, if you can believe it."

Bonus trivia: The first "Treehouse of Horror" episode aired in the show's second season, starting the tradition of aliens Kang and Kodos appearing in a segment.

8. MAD ABOUT YOU

"We just interviewed Danny Jacobson, one of the co-creators of *Mad About You* with Paul Reiser and Anne Ramsay. And we find out that the crazy sister on that show was inspired by a real person they knew."

Bonus trivia: Though Paul and Jamie's dog came to be known as Murray, for the first few episodes he was nameless and known as "The Dog".

9. THE X-FILES

"The initial idea for the show was inspired by Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein's investigation into Watergate and all that paranoia. And Canada's very own William B. Davis, who played Cigarette Smoking Man, gave us a great interview."

Bonus trivia: One of creator Chris Carter's main TV inspirations for *X-Files* was *Kolchak: The Night Stalker*. Actor Darren McGavin, who played Carl Kolchak, appeared in two episodes of *X-Files* as Agent Arthur Dales, a character described as the "father of the X-Files."

10. THE FRESH PRINCE OF BEL AIR

"We got Benny Medina, the inspiration for Will's character [and former talent agent for Jennifer Lopez, Mariah Carey and Tyra Banks]. He was so fun! Plus, there's also one on Will Smith's influence on that show."

Bonus trivia: Jennifer Hudson, who won an Oscar for her role in *Dreamgirls*, first discovered songs from the musical it was based on by watching the *Fresh Prince* episode "The Script Formerly Known As". Will lip-synced Jennifer Holliday's version of "And I Am Telling You I'm Not Going", which Hudson eventually sang in the film version.

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