

Buckaroo Sheriff of Texas

US : 1950 : dir. Philip Ford : Republic : 60 min
 prod: : scr: : dir.ph.:
Michael Chapin; Eilene Janssen
 James Bell; Hugh O'Brian; Steve Pendleton; Tristram Coffin; William Haade; Selmer Jackson,
 Edward Cassidy; Billy Dix

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Yippy-ky-yay! Michael Chapin and Eilene Janssen are "The Rough Ridin' Kids"! Hot dang!
 Source: The Boys' and Girls' Cinema Clubs Annual

Speelfilm Encyclopedie review:

“This is the first of four so-called "**Rough Ridin' Kids**" Westerns with young Chapin and Janssen in the leads. Republic hoped that the young Western audience would find it fun to see people their own age in action. Chapin had already played in various Westerns since 1946. In this film, however, both actors are not able to make up for a total lack of action and - how should one say it? - of interest as well. O'Brian is here to be seen in one of his very first roles. He made his film debut in 1950. ½* ”

The Boys' and Girls' Cinema Clubs Annual cover feature – “The Youngest Western Stars in Films”:

“On the cover of this annual you'll see a young cowboy and cowgirl sitting on a load of hay in sunny California. The boy is thirteen-year old Michael Chapin and eleven-year old Eilene Janssen [*sic*]. These two are the youngest Western stars in films – and how they enjoy themselves!

Michael can ride fast and shoot straight. He is a friend of the famous Roy Rogers, with whom he has made several pictures and who has taught him fancy tricks with gin and horse. One of the hair-raising stunts Michael frightens grown-ups doing is hanging down by one stirrup from his galloping horse, with his face only a few inches from the ground.

Eilene Janssen has been an entertainer since the age of four. She has appeared on radio and television shows as well as in films. She has always wanted to be a cowgirl star, and now, with Michael Chapin as her co-star, she has got off to a fast start. One of her chief ambitions has been to own a horse. By way of a start, she acquired three dogs, two cats, a goldfish and a bluejay. Her hobbies are singing, dancing, ice-skating, playing the marimba, and – oh yes – cooking; her mother says she cooks the best cakes in the house; her father agrees, and he should know – he eats them!

We're glad to have you on our cover, Michael and Eilene, and we're sure British boys and girls everywhere will enjoy seeing you there and on the screen.”

[no listing in "Halliwell's Film Guide", "Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 2001", "The Critics' Film Guide", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television", "The Time Out Film Guide", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993", "Video Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

The Moving Picture Boy entry on Chapin:

“Debonair Michael was the elder brother of Billy Chapin of "**NIGHT OF THE HUNTER**" fame. Their maternal grandfather was William Graham, owner and publisher of Harper's and Graham's magazines. None of Michael's films was as distinguished as "**HUNTER**", but he made a tidy living in open-air parts, some of them leading ones – for instance in "**BUCKAROO SHERIFF OF TEXAS**", "**ARIZONA MANHUNT**" and "**THE DAKOTA KID**". He was as near as we got around 1950 to a Buzz Barton or Buzzy Henry. (Only Kelly Reno has emulated him of late, in a strictly non-fancy way).

Roy Rogers taught Michael various shooting and riding tricks, including hanging by one stirrup from a galloping horse with his face only inches from the ground. He survived it.

Michael Chapin pressed on into his teens, with another starring role in "**WILD HORSE AMBUSH**" (52). Then came "**WAGONS WEST**" (52), "**SPRINGFIELD RIFLE**" (52), "**PRIDE OF THE BLUE GRASS**" (54) and a small part in his kid brother's star outing, "**NIGHT OF THE HUNTER**" (55).”

No further information currently available. Contrary to the Cinema Clubs Annual, Chapin was 15 and Janssen 13 at the start of their series. Next year came "**ARIZONA MANHUNT**", but I've not as yet identified the later titles in the series. This was by no means the first attempt by a studio to launch a Western series aimed at kids and featuring actors their own age. Buzz Barton was probably the most successful, in the closing years of the silent period, but then as here, such films were hampered by undue concern over the violence quotient, and the results unfeasibly tame. The producers had not the wit to tally up the murders and violent deaths in classic boys' tales like "**TREASURE ISLAND**", "**KIM**" or "**HUCKLEBERRY FINN**", and opted more for a "**Little House on the Prairie**" tone – scarcely what their target audience would have wanted to see, or their actors would have wanted to play.

Chapin's non-Western titles included "**THE SULLIVANS**" (44), "**IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE**" (46) and "**CALL NORTHSIDE 777**" (47), but buffing his Levi's with hot saddle-leather was definitely his forté. Janssen had appeared earlier in "**THE GREEN YEARS**" (46) with Dean Stockwell.

See also "**ARIZONA MANHUNT**", and subject index under **WESTERNS**.