

The Travels of Jamie McPheeters

US TV series : 1963 : dir. : ABC / MGM : 26 x 50 min
 prod: : scr: : dir.ph.:
[Kurt Russell](#)
 Dan O'Herlihy; Charles Bronson

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Kbytes	Ω	□	≠	Z	⌘	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
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The siren song of Disney is calling him – fight it Kurt, fight it!
Halliwell's Television Companion review:

Source: *The Moving Picture Boy*

“A young boy’s experiences on an 1840’s wagon train. Carefully mounted re-creation of frontier days; the emphasis on character rather than action prevented its popularity. From the novel by Robert Lewis Taylor. * ”

The History of Television incidental note:

“While young Kurt Russell, in the TV version of Robert Lewis Taylor’s Pulitzer Prize-winning **"The Travels of Jamie McPheeters"** walked the dusty roads, an army of actors walked the low road in another successful ABC gamble, **"Peyton Place"**... ”

Excerpt from **The Moving Picture Boy** entry on Russell:

“...In 1963 he landed the title role, as the son of an itinerant doctor, in a TV Western series called **"The Travels of Jamie McPheeters"**, and more or less simultaneously played Jamie in a film, **"GUNS OF DIABLO"**, drawn from the same book. He also made appearances in other series like **"The Fugitive"** and **"Gilligan’s Island"**. Soon afterwards he was signed up by the Walt Disney studios, and had his first outing in **"FOLLOW ME, BOYS!"** ... ”

[no listing in "How Sweet It Was", "Television's Greatest Hits" or "25 Years of ITV - 1955-1980"]

No further information currently available. The juxtaposition of this and **"Peyton Place"** is mind boggling, but no doubt it at all made sense to somebody once. A wagon train would provide the ideal format for a TV Western series, the regulars trundling from one neatly compartmentalised drama to another, with the freedom to accrete or discard characters easily as the series progressed, avoiding audience over-familiarity with the surroundings. Series of this ilk are prone, however, to relegate their notional lead characters into a supporting role, while the adults claim the lion’s share of the drama (see **"Circus Boy"**, for example). It’s not known whether this was sold to UK television, but I suspect not.

Kurt Russell, looking winsome for his publicity shot, was just 12. He’d made his film debut the same year in the Presley vehicle **"IT HAPPENED AT THE WORLD’S FAIR"**, fifteen years before he would portray **"ELVIS"** in the TV biopic (although any resemblance between the two was hard fought for). **"GUNS OF DIABLO"**, released on the European circuit as a feature film, was in fact only cobbled together from episodes of this series, an insulting habit American distributors were much prone to in the sixties (several Ron Ely **Tarzan** "films", for example, and several **Lassie** titles, were merely repackaged television episodes sold abroad as movies.) Sucked into the maw of Disney factory production, Russell appeared in **"FOLLOW ME, BOYS!"** (63), **"THE HORSE IN THE GREY FLANNEL SUIT"** (68), **"THE COMPUTER WORE TENNIS SHOES"** (69) and much family dross besides.

Like contemporary Jodie Foster, he somehow weathered this to become a bankable lead actor, notably in John Carpenter films, and today often makes a more engaging macho man than his friends Stallone and Schwarzenegger, with a twinkle in the eye to suggest he doesn’t take his tough persona too seriously. Strangely, he has resisted any urge to diversify into more interesting character parts, of which he is certainly more capable than they (who have both tried repeatedly).

See subject index under **TV SERIES** and **WESTERNS**.