

Kurt Russell rode West in 1960s wagon train

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Dear Ken: I seem to remember that Kirk Russell starred in a western series on TV when he was a boy. Can you help with the title?

That was “The Travels of Jamie McPheeters,” which ran during the 1963-1964 season with Russell as a 12-year-old boy on a wagon train heading West in 1849. Dan O’Herlihy played his father, a scalawag and a doctor. The cast also featured four of the Osmond Brothers as the Kissels (Micah, Leviticus, Deuteronomy and Lamentations). Charles Bronson joined the series in later episodes as wagon master, but the series only made it one season. Russell, 60, was born in Springfield, Mass., and was getting close to making his dream come true of playing major league baseball when an injury ended his career. His dad, Bing Russell, played Deputy Clem Foster in a number of episodes of “Bonanza.”

Dear Ken: Where was Kal Penn of “Harold and Kumar” fame born?

Penn, 34, who plays Kumar to John Cho’s Harold, was born in Montclair, N.J. He recently spent two years as a mid-level staffer in the White House and currently is working on a sitcom set at the United Nations. Next month he and Cho return in “A Very Harold & Kumar Christmas,” as the duo treks through NYC looking for the ideal Christmas tree.

Dear Ken: What happened to child actor Bobby Buntrock, who played the boy in the 1960s sitcom “Hazel”?

Buntrock, who played Harold Baxter in the comedy, died in an automobile accident in 1974 at the age of 21. As a youth he appeared in the first Rock’em Sock’em Robots toy commercial for the Marx Toy Company in 1964.

Dear Ken: What's doing with Gina Torres, who played Zoe Washburne on "Firefly"?

Cuban-American Washburne, 42, was just in the TV series "Huge" but presently co-stars on "Suits." She has also been doing the voice of Airachnid on the cartoon series "Transformers Prime." And she is in the movie "Mr. Sophistication." Trained in opera and jazz, she and husband Laurence Fishburne have a young daughter. She says the experience of making Firefly left her incredibly spoiled because the cast and crew worked so well together. "I thought that there would never be another occasion for that, and I have to say, these guys (on "Suits") are fantastic," she says.

If you have a trivia question about actors, singers, movies, TV shows or pop culture, e-mail your query to Ken Beck at kbtag2@gmail.com

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