

SMITHSONIAN CHANNEL™ GREENLIGHTS LIMITED SERIES
THE REAL JESUS OF NAZARETH
FEATURING ROBERT POWELL WHO PLAYED JESUS IN THE 1977 LANDMARK
MINISERIES

Will Air in 2017 Timed to 40th Anniversary of *Jesus of Nazareth*

NEW YORK, October 14, 2016 – Starring no less than seven Academy Award® winners, the 1977 miniseries *Jesus of Nazareth* was a global television event, becoming one of the most celebrated TV biographies of Jesus ever made. Now, 40 years later, the actor who portrayed the Son of God is returning to the Holy Land to seek out clues to the real historical figure who inspired Christianity. THE REAL JESUS OF NAZARETH, a four-part series, will premiere on Smithsonian Channel in 2017. The announcement was made today by David Royle, Executive Vice President of Programming and Production, Smithsonian Channel.

THE REAL JESUS OF NAZARETH will combine scenes from the landmark series with Powell's journey throughout modern Israel, where he meets archaeologists and scholars who help him reconstruct the story of the man who changed history and inspired billions.

"*Jesus of Nazareth* is a cultural phenomenon, and essentially created a new image of Jesus for the television age," said Royle. "It's a privilege to have gained access to the original film footage and Robert Powell's unique connection to this story makes him a wonderful and insightful guide to the historical Jesus and the Holy Land."

Jesus of Nazareth featured a cast of blockbuster stars, but when the director cast his lead character, he chose a relatively unknown British actor, Robert Powell, who gave a performance for the ages. Since then the series has become an Easter and Christmas television tradition for many. Globally, more than 90 million people have watched it.

THE REAL JESUS OF NAZARETH is produced by Impossible Factual for Smithsonian Networks. The Executive Producers for Impossible Factual are Jonathan Drake and Steve Maher. John Cavanagh, Charles Poe and David Royle serve as Executive Producers for Smithsonian Channel.

Smithsonian Channel™, owned by Smithsonian Networks™, a joint venture between Showtime Networks Inc. and the Smithsonian Institution, is where curiosity lives, inspiration strikes and wonders never cease. This is the place for awe-inspiring stories, powerful documentaries and amazing entertainment across multiple platforms. Smithsonian Channel combines the storytelling prowess of SHOWTIME® with the unmatched resources and rich traditions of the Smithsonian, to create award-winning programming that shines new light on popular genres such as air and space, history, science, nature, and pop culture. Among the network's offerings are series including *Aerial America*, *Million Dollar American Princesses*, *The Weapon Hunter*, *Mighty Ships*, *Mighty Planes* and *Air Disasters*, as well as critically-acclaimed specials that include *Civil War 360*, *9/11: The Heartland Tapes*; *MLK: The Assassination Tapes* and *The Day Kennedy Died*. Smithsonian Networks also operates Smithsonian Earth™, through SN Digital LLC., a new subscription video streaming service delivering spectacular original nature and wildlife content. To learn more, go to www.smithsonianchannel.com, or connect with us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

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