

Melissa Gilbert sheds her *Little House* image and speaks candidly about work and love.

INTERVIEW

Twenty-four-year-old Melissa Gilbert knows all about leading a double life. On Sunday, Jan. 18, she stars in the NBC movie "Blood Vows: The Story of a Mafia Wife." In the film, she plays innocent bumpkin Marian Winslow, a woman who doesn't realize - until it's too late - that the man to whom she's married, lawyer Edward Moran (Joe Penny), is deeply involved with the Mafia.

Gilbert, who literally grew up playing Laura Ingalls Wilder on "Little House on the Prairie," is currently starring in much more than just a

TV movie. Her rocky six-year romance with Brat Packer Rob Lowe has made her and Lowe on-going co-stars on the covers of supermarket tabloids. Will they or won't they? And with whom? Just a few days before this interview, however, Gilbert announced her engagement to Lowe.

Here, Gilbert discusses "Blood Vows," her special friendship with Joe Penny and her relationship with Lowe and the Brat Pack.

In "Blood Vows," you and Joe Penny fall passionately in love. Was it fun?

Ed and Marion fall in love blindly. We've all done that. Certainly, I have. (Giggles) Thank God for Joe Penny! There's definitely - how do I put this? - a lot of heat ... passion ... something really there between us. It's the best. I'm not going to deny the fact that I have a crush on the man.

Did you have a romantic relationship during the making of the movie?

We have a distinctive relationship. We looked it up in a thesaurus and decided "distinctive" was the right word. No, there wasn't a romantic relationship. But there was an instant bond. Of

course everyone on the set thought we were sleeping together, which is totally untrue.

You have some very steamy love scenes in "Blood Vows." Do you think your image will change?

I don't know if I could have done those scenes with anyone else but Joe. He made it very comfortable. What a guy! I'd love to work with him again.

Your romance with Rob Lowe has really put you in the public eye. How do you deal with all the publicity?

I don't know whether to laugh or cry. Right now it's exciting because I'll be walking down the street and someone will call out to me and say, "You're Melissa Gilbert. Congratulations. I heard about your engagement and I'm so happy for you." That keeps me laughing.

But certainly you didn't laugh at the stories about Rob Lowe and other women.

I had no choice but to learn to laugh this year - or else I would have fallen into little tiny pieces. Us magazine just named him Romeo of the year along with pictures of him and six different women. On the next page they have a photo of me and Billy Idol saying we are engaged! But no one can keep up with what Rob and I are really doing.

You must be friendly with Rob's group of friends - best known as the Brat Pack.

I'm very happy for them and they've all managed to keep their heads about their success. Rob and I have reminded them often that more people die in this business than any other. And only a handful of people really stay successful. There's always someone prettier than you waiting to take your place.

BY CONNIE PASSALACQUA

ABEL DISTRIBUTING, INC.

EUREKA UPRIGHT

With Vibra-Groomer II®

4.0 Amp Motor

- 6 Position Dial-A-Nap®
- Dual Edge Kleener®
- Brilliant Dirt Seeking Headlight

- Powerful Motor
- Top Loading Large Capacity Disposable Dust Bag

SAVE \$55

\$74⁹⁵

Model 1458

LIST PRICE \$129.95

ABEL DISTRIBUTING INC.

1529 Chicago Rd., Chicago Hts. 754-3708

CHANENSON SUPPLY COMPANY

FACTORY OUTLET AND OFFICE FURNITURE LIQUIDATION CENTER

WOW!

STEEL BOOKCASES

with 2, 3 or 4 Shelves

CHANENSON PRICE

from only \$39⁰⁰

1529-37 WESTERN AVENUE • CHICAGO HTS.
MON.-FRI. 10-7; SAT. & SUN. 10-5 748-1154



Want your message seen each night? Put it in TV UPDATE the program guide with proven nightly use.

Gilbert: "I had no choice but to learn to laugh."

