Melissa Gilbert

"This is the first time I've been

New television drama exhausting for Melissa Gilbert



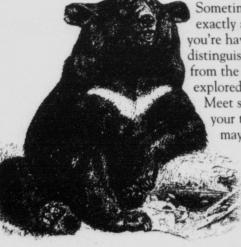
Melissa Gilbert is shown in a scene from the four-hour television drama "Danielle Steel's 'Zoya.""

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'Danielle Steel's Zoya' scheduled for 2-night run

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — "I found out I was pregnant two days before I was to go to Europe," Melissa Gilbert relates of the odyssey that took her to St. Petersburg, Paris, New York and Montreal for the four-hour television drama "Danielle Steel's 'Zoya.'

"It was an exhausting, grueling schedule," Gilbert said. "We were doing basically two movies in a very short amount of time. We jumped all over the place. We didn't start in 1917 and end in 1970.

"There were some days when I was 17 to 35 to 38 to 22. The only days when we didn't have that were when my makeup was my close-to-50 look and 70 and up. Those were two different prosthetic makeups that each took close to four hours — two hours to put on and two hours to take off.

'There I was, dressed as a 70-year-old woman — with morning sickness.

"Zoya," another plot-heavy Steel drama, can be seen tonight and Monday on NBC. Gilbert plays a girl of Russian nobility who is orphaned by the 1917 Revolution and raised by her grandmother (Diana Rigg).

The Zoya saga includes two marriages, success as a fashion designer and a return to her homeland late in life. Her first leading man," Gilbert's husband Bruce Boxleitner.

many locations, costumes and House on the Prairie."

makeups, Gilbert had to contend with the "suits" from the network.

"Believe me, there were battles—big battles," she said. "It's very difficult to get things past a very conservative sort of network.

They wanted me to play a Russian, but they didn't want me to have a Russian accent. They didn't want me to wear hats, though most of the movie takes place in the '20s and '30s, when women wore hats.

'There were battles, but the battles were won. It was an epic movie and an epic battle, but it was certainly well worth the

"Zoya" was on location 10 days in St. Petersburg, two in Paris, 21/2 weeks in New York and five weeks in Montreal.

"Every day, there was a budget problem," Gilbert said. "There's just no money anymore. It's not like it was. I've been around long enough to tell that there really isn't money in these projects.

"The networks have money now to hire major motion picture actors to star in the occasional miniseries or movie-of-the-week. But then the budget itself is so small."

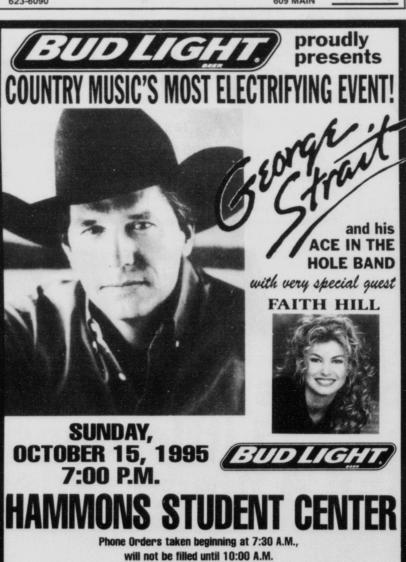
Gilbert describes herself in "a state of semiretirement right now; I don't know when I'll go back to work. I've been working so hard for so long, I really need a bit of a rest. I'm also over five months pregnant, so I can't work now anyway.

Indeed, Melissa Gilbert, now 29, has been working most of her life. The granddaughter of comedy writer Harry Crane ("The Honeymooners") and daughter of comehusband is played by "my favorite dian Paul Gilbert, she started making TV commercials at 2. She was 9 when Michael Landon cast Aside from the rigors of the her as daughter Laura in "Little

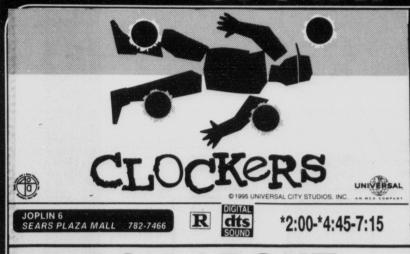
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*2:30-*5:30-7:40 BABE *2:00-*5:00 **MORTAL KOMBAT** PG-13 *2:00-*5:00-7:15

she sighed. "It's nice to have a "Choices"), date rape ("Without husband who's working steadily.' Her Consent"), incest ("Shattered Boxleitner has started the sec-Trust"), forced sterilization ond season of the syndicated sci-fi 'Against Her Will") and a host of other issues. She also appeared in series, "Babylon 5." By previous a couple of series, "Stand By Your marriages, he has two sons, she Man" and last season's "Sweet has one.

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ridden TV movies and miniseries. able to sit back and relax and not

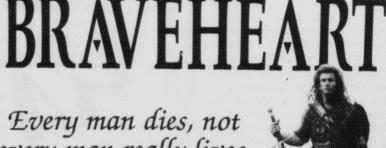
She has dealt with abortion worry about money or anything,

After 10 years on "Prairie," she Justice."

became the sweetheart of angst-







every man really lives.

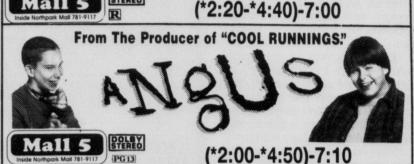


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