



FORMER SALESMAN — Linwood Boomer, shown here with his TV wife, Melissa Sue Anderson, is a star of NBC-TV's "Little House on the Prairie," now but he was pounding doors as a salesman just a few months ago. Boomer portrays Adam Kendall, the young blind teacher who recently became Charles Ingalls' son-in-law.

'Now I'm Actor' Says Linwood Boomer

Linwood Boomer, who now stars on NBC-TV's hit "Little House on the Prairie," is lucky he wasn't arrested on the day he learned that acting lessons had paid off.

Boomer, who stars as Adam Kendall, the young blind man who recently married Charles Ingalls' eldest daughter, Mary, was working as a door-to-door salesman in a rough area of Los Angeles when he decided to go to a pay phone to call his agent and see if his audition for star-producer Michael Landon had produced any results.

The agent told him that Landon and NBC-TV were so happy with his audition that they not only wanted him to do a guest-starring role — but wanted to sign him as a regular on the show.

"I hung up, let out a scream that startled people for blocks

and grabbed a nearby woman and gave her a kiss as I yelled, 'I'm gonna be an actor!'" says Boomer.

His first "Little House on the Prairie" role was the final show of last season — and it wound up as the highest rated of the series' episodes for the entire year.

"That's when Michael decided that, instead of just a teacher for his daughter, I'd become her husband, too," says Boomer. "And now he's talking about grandchildren."

Boomer, a native of Canada who was raised in the San Francisco area, spent two years as an acting student. After graduation he got an agent — then he married the agent's secretary — and set out to become an actor. The coveted role on "Little House on the Prairie" was his first important job, and he's still beaming about his luck.

But there was more to it than luck.

"He's a fine young actor," says Landon. "He does such a splendid job as Adam Kendall that I've had letters from viewers asking how a blind man ever learned to act that well. Of course Lin isn't blind, but he's such a good actor that you'd swear he was."

Boomer, who is only 22-years-old, still lives in the small, modest home in Pasadena, Calif., and has no intention of moving into Hollywood to join the celebrities. He and his wife, Shannon, prefer to stay home nights watching old movies on TV as they play with their two cats and one dog — and indulge in their favorite hobby, making apple dolls.

"I have always hoped that the lady I kissed on the street that day has seen me on TV," he says. "Otherwise she's going to think I was just another weirdo — instead of the luckiest actor in town," says Boomer.

Jay Stewart Search Ends Happily

HOLLYWOOD — For the entire 14 1/2 years of its life "Let's Make a Deal" was announced by Jay Stewart. And Jay came to be something more than an announcer, he was Monty Hall's assistant in that wild mayhem that called itself a TV program.

Similarly, the show was more than just a job to Jay Stewart. He says it was family. Once, he and Hall sat down and figured out that they spent more time with each other than they spent with their respective families.

And so, when the show finally ended — the last show was taped in Las Vegas on Dec. 22, 1976 — it proved to be a traumatic experience for Stewart. It was an experience which, as it turned out, almost cost him his marriage and his life.

"When it went off," Stewart says, "it was worse than getting a divorce — it was really just like a death in the family. We had all been so close that I was simply at a loss."

Ask TV Scout

REPEAT AND REPEAT — Is there any chance that the TV movie, "Ransom For a Dead Man" with Lee Grant and Columbo will be shown again. I enjoyed it immensely and so many of my friends have never seen it. — Mrs. Grace Bolewicki, Baltimore, Md.

That was one of the two

There were practical considerations, too. Stewart was — and still is — an announcer by trade. He says that jobs for announcers are always scarce and, even though his credits were impressive, there are more announcers around than there are jobs.

"I was worried," he says. "There was my salary. After fourteen and a half years, it had gone up a lot, and I knew that whatever job I got next, it would have to be much lower."

He worked. He got a few jobs here, and a few jobs there. Now, he has landed another plum — Jay Stewart is currently the announcer with Mike Douglas, following Douglas' move to California — but that is only recently.

For some time after "Let's Make a Deal" ended, it was slow going. "So I worked enough to keep from worrying about money," he says, "but I wasn't happy. I went to see my doctor, who said

that this would be a good time for me to lose some

weight. He had been after me to lose weight for a long time."

Stewart took his doctor's advice and, with the doctor guiding him, lost 60 pounds over an 18-week period. He says that has proven to be a two-edged accomplishment — "I feel great, physically, and all my tests for blood pressure and everything else are much better now, but the problem is that none of my fans recognize me any more because I'm so thin."

The loss of weight may have helped him, physically, but it did nothing to cure his depression. He says he felt like something was wrong with his life. So he and his wife separated, which was not the cure-all he had expected.

"The first month," he says, "I enjoyed it — I could come and go as I pleased. The second month I was miserable. The third month we started talking about it. And

the fourth month we got together again and things have never been better between us."

Even with his marriage better than ever, Stewart says he still suffered from a deep feeling that something was wrong with his life.

An old friend, producer Robert Munger (he created "The Omen" and the recent "Born Again"), had long been after Stewart to go to church. Finally, one Sunday, he went and he's been going every Sunday since.

And, one of those Sundays, he stayed after the service to join a group in a meeting. An assistant pastor recognized the sorrow in his eyes, took his hands and said, "What's wrong?"

Stewart says it all poured out, the tears and the fears and the need.

"Now," he says, "I guess I'm born again."

He says he doesn't want to be evangelistic about it, but

it has done wonders for him. He is happy — he admits that the new job, with Douglas, has certainly helped — and he is physically fit and his marriage is solid. So the trauma of the end of "Let's Make a Deal" is over, at last. It has made Jay Stewart in several ways, a new man.

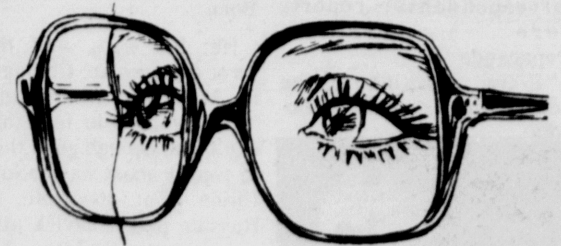
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