

Shooting Stars

by MARY ANN COOPER

Robert Tyler portrays Trucker McKenzie

Robert Tyler portrays Trucker McKenzie, a hot-blooded new hero on *Loving*, in the fiery tradition of daytime television's great romantic rebels.

Angry and defiant, Trucker has always lived by his own code, bucking authority, flouting convention, and sleeping in his beat-up truck when he couldn't camp out under the stars. But now, since arriving in Corinth, his life has changed radically. He has fallen in love with beautiful Trisha Alden — and his destiny has become inextricably entwined with hers.

For handsome newcomer Robert Tyler, the role of Trucker represents an exciting challenge. A native of Stockton, Cal., he is the first actor in his family. While growing up — first in northern California, then in Phoenix, Arizona — his main interest was music; and all through high school he played keyboard and trumpet. (To this day he remains an avid rock'n'roll fan.)

After finishing a year of college, he came to New York in pursuit of a theatrical career. To pay for his acting lessons, he held down a variety of jobs — messenger, waiter, file clerk — but his most interesting assignment came when he worked behind the scenes at New York's famed Radio City Music Hall. "I was a kind of gofer without portfolio," he explains. "One day I'd be selling

tee-shirts in the lobby during Grateful Dead concerts; the next day I'd be running the elevator that took the Rocketts from their dressing rooms to the stage. There I was, surrounded by all those beautiful girls — but just my luck, the elevator never got stuck, not even once."

Eventually, Robert's acting career took off and he no longer had to moonlight to pay the rent. Off-Broadway, he played a "would-be Eskimo" in the comedy, "Almost Romance," opposite Helen Slater, and worked with Elizabeth Berridge in "Sorrows and

Sons," an emotionally intense drama set during the Vietnam War era.

In June, 1988, Tyler was cast as Spence Davies, a short-term, but highly visible character on "As the World Turns." In fact, he actually screen tested for his current role on "Loving" during a rehearsal break from the other soap. Rushing from one studio to the next was bit hectic, he recalls, but it did give him a slight edge over the competition. "I was the only Trucker who showed up for the audition already in makeup," he said laughingly.

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