

THE STARLOST
24 ONE-HOUR EPISODES - IN COLOR

THE STARLOST: the incredible adventure of a giant spacecraft carrying the survivors of a dead planet Earth on the most critical mission ever launched by man: an endless journey across the Universe in search of a new world. Earthship ARK: hundreds of miles long... a huge grapelike cluster of metal domes, each a tiny world isolated from all the others. In the countless generations that have lived and died since the launching of the ARK, everyone has forgotten that the Earth ever existed... forgotten that they are streaking through space on a collision course with disaster. Forgotten... until one man stumbles on the truth: that they are THE STARLOST!

Executive producer Douglas Trumbull's revolutionary "Magicam" camera technique gives THE STARLOST the most exciting and realistic special effects ever achieved on television.

Jerome M. Zeitman serves as co-executive producer.

Creator/Story editor Harlan Ellison has won innumerable science fiction awards, including one for a "Star Trek" script and one for editing the "new wave" anthology, Dangerous Visions. His stories and articles have been translated into sixteen languages, have been anthologized over 200 times, and are included in a dozen "best anthologies" lists.

STARS

KEIR DULLEA - Devon
GAY ROWAN - Rachel
ROBIN WARD - Garth

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

Douglas Trumbull & Jerome M. Zeitman

PRODUCER

William Davidson

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER

Ed Richardson

CREATOR/STORY EDITOR

Harlan Ellison

EXECUTIVE STORY CONSULTANT

Norman Klenman

TECHNICAL ADVISOR

Ben Bova

ART DIRECTOR

Jack McAdam

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER for GLEN-WARREN

Gerard Rochon

EXECUTIVE IN CHARGE OF PRODUCTION for CTV

Arthur Weinthal

Produced by Glen-Warren Productions, Limited
in association with
the CTV Television Network

Distributed by Twentieth Century-Fox Television

THE WORD

In the industry, they call the basic format for a television series, "the bible." Sometimes they call it "the book." And I once saw it titled THE PRECEPTS. All of those are pretty lofty, but seem to me just a bit rigid. I'd like to make it a lot more comfortable here at THE STARLOST so -- though this sheaf of pages of type and illustration will serve you as "the word" from its creator -- nothing is concrete, nothing is carved in granite, nothing should be discounted. Everything is possible, no idea is so farfetched that it contains no germ of a workable story. Hopefully, THE STARLOST will not be a series about which its Producers can ever say, "Our hero would never do that," or "We can't deal with that subject."

It is a series about the far future, and it uses the themes and appertenances of speculative fiction, but it is neither "sci-fi" (that odious neologism) nor shoot-'em-ups in space. It is, again hopefully, a visual novel in many sections that will bring honour to the aspirations and traditions of the science fiction idiom. There will be many explanations of what THE STARLOST is, from many sources, but I offer here the theme of the series as conceived by myself: it is the long story of three young people discovering their world, and their place in it. It is also a study of many different cultures in conflict with each other. Oh, of course it's adventure, and exotic societies, and the wonder of deep space, but those are merely the surface elements that permit us to study ourselves through the eyes of two young men and a young woman as they go on The Search.

All I ask of you who come to THE STARLOST with words or actions or dreams is that you think fresh, think different, and... dare.

The rest of us will try and make your dreams come true.

Harlan Ellison
10 April 73

THE BACKSTORY

The endless voyage of THE STARLOST begins three hundred years from today. The year is 2285 AD.

Cataclysm. Something dreadful and apocalyptic has happened to the Earth. Perhaps it was a flareup of the Sun, perhaps a giant meteor passing so close to the Earth that our atmosphere will be drawn off, perhaps it will be the hellish War to end all Wars, perhaps an invasion from space. We need not know the specific. We will find out much later, in the third or fifth or ninth year of the series.

All we need to know is that whatever befell the Earth, it was more terrible than anything we can imagine, and vague, dark references to it will occasionally be made... references as steeped in myth and mystery as "the sinking of Atlantis" and that is precisely the tone that should be used: the death of some incalculably ancient and golden mysterious homeland.

These references will be made by the descendents of the survivors of the Great Exodus.

Yes, there were survivors.

When the end was seen to be inevitable, the reactions of all of Earth population were polarized. Bizarrely. The majority of the "average" people went mad in proscribed ways: catatonia, libertinism, utter apathy, psychotic behaviour, violence, self-pity, hopelessness. But there was a sizable Minority who reconciled themselves to the death of the planet and who resolved to keep the seed of humanity alive. They were artists and physicians and technicians and philosophers who realized the only thing left to them was saving a segment of the Earth's population that could viably be sent into space to settle on other worlds.

To this end, they began to build the Ark.

We'd had space travel for three hundred years, but we had only settled sparsely on Mars and Venus. The Moon was a research station. Humankind as a whole wanted no part of the barren and difficult worlds of the solar system. And of the twenty flights that had gone out, none had ever returned. (There was a reason for this; a reason we will learn in the final segment of the series; a reason that forms the startling conclusion to the series and ties it

all up as a "television novel." But again, we need not concern ourselves with what what happened to those flights. They went out, and never returned.)

The cataclysm would destroy Mars and Venus as well as Earth. The solar system would no longer be hospitable to humankind. So they began the most monumental construction project ever undertaken by humans.

In the dark spaces between the Earth and the Moon, they began to build the Ark.

Two hundred miles long, built to hold 500,000 people, designed by space engineers and estheticians to carry the genetically-preferred and carefully-selected cream of the human crop to other island universes, other galaxies, other suns, other planets... Earthlike planets where they could sow the seed of the Earth and permit the races to flourish.

All of this happened three hundred years from today.

The Ark was built, staffed, and stocked with a supercargo of half a million men, women and children of all races ages and beliefs. Animals were put aboard, hydroponics gardens, whole cultures were built and put aboard, out there between the Earth and the Moon.

And then, the Ark left.

And the Earth was destroyed.

Traveling at just under light speed on its CTR drive (Controlled Thermonuclear Reactor), it sped through space, out past the dark and frigid giants of the solar system, and entered interstellar space. It traveled for one hundred Earth-years and then... something terrible happened to the ship. Whatever strange and final fate had befallen the twenty deep space ships that an adventurous Earth had sent out to find new worlds... now befell the Ark.

(For those whose curiosity cannot be contained, I will impart only this much of the smashing secret ending of the series, which is inextricably involved with the disaster of the Ark: when a star collapses, a massive star, to such a small radius that its gravitational field becomes so intense that not even light can escape from it, a "black hole" is formed; any object coming within a few miles of this "black hole" will be sucked into it and cannot escape. Cosmologists such as Thomas Gold of Cornell, Kip Thorne of Princeton and Fred Hoyle

(formerly) of Cambridge have postulated the theory of the "black hole," and gravitational collapse, and by extension of their theory, if an entire galaxy were to collapse in this way, it would form a "black hole" many thousands of miles wide. No one knows what would happen in a "black hole" that wide. No one, except the creator of this series, who now suggests that having proved he knows how the series should end, his best move is to go on with the backstory.)

Four hundred years from today, 2385 AD approximately, the space-bred generations aboard the Ark suffer an "accident." A disaster that kills the crew, seals off each individual culture for all time from the others, and sends the Ark forward in deep space with no one at its helm.

Before we go further with the backstory, we should pause and describe the ship to you. Prior promotion of this series in newspapers and trade magazines has confused the issue of what the Ark looked like.

It's necessary for you to know what the physical plant looks like, how it operates, what set-potentials are available to you as a writer. To this end, THE STARLOST has engaged a writer with unassailable credentials:

BEN BOVA, editor of Analog magazine, author of many books on the physical sciences, novelist, science fiction Nebula award nominee, authority on lasers, meteorology, space science, technical editor on Project Vanguard at the Martin Company, marketing coordinator for the Avco Everett Research Labs, member of the National Association of science writers... Ben Bova is our Technical Advisor. All scripts will be scrutinized by Ben for accuracy and for the most daring in extrapolative thought.

What follows, then, is Ben Bova's description of the Ark. It is accompanied by drawings done for the series by science fiction Hugo award winner Tim Kirk, who worked with me and Ben to illustrate specially for this presentation just what it is you'll have to work with.

Here are Ben and Tim... and the Ark.

Description of Ship

by Ben Bova

The ship is an organic unit, a clustering of separate globular environmental domes, each some fifty miles in diameter. The domes are linked by tubular corridors that carry life support, power, communications and other systems. Overall length of the ship is about 200 miles. In outward appearance, the ship somewhat resembles a cluster of grapes: the 50-mile-diameter domes connected by the branching tube corridors.

Each dome contains a completely enclosed ecology large enough to support a sizable population of colonists. From the inside the dome could look and "feel" like an isolated valley -- large enough to sustain vilages and farms, streams and hills, forests and meadows. But this "valley" is walled not by mountains but by the structure of the dome itself.

Power and Propulsion

The main power for the entire ship -- and for its propulsion engines -- comes from a set of hydrogen fusion reactors. These are also called Controlled Thermonuclear Reactors (CTR's)

A CTR uses hydrogen as its fuel and converts it in a nuclear reaction into helium. This reaction yields energy. Hydrogen fusion is the same power source that is used by the sun and all stars, and thus is the principle source of energy in the universe.

To make a CTR, you must recreate, in small scale, the conditions in the heart of a star -- that is, produce a hydrogen plasma (a plasma is a gas in which The atoms are ionized, that is, the electrons have been torn free of the atomic nuclei) to repeat, a hydrogen plasma exists in the core of the CTR at a temperature of some 100 million degrees. To hold this star- hot plasma, very intense magnetic fields are used, since the plasma would destroy any physical material it would touch. The magnets producing this field are superconducting cryogenic magnets. Their wires are composed of compounds of metals such as niobium and zirconium, bonded to copper or aluminum, and then wound in a shape roughly like that of the seam of a baseball. The body of the "baseball" is the CTR core, made of stainless steel or titanium; inside it is the star-hot hydrogen plasma. The super- conducting magnets can create enormously strong magnetic fields --

100,000 gauss is commonly achieved today. (The Earth's magnetic field, which is strong enough to keep compass needles aligned and divert energetic cosmic ray particles, is less than one gauss!) But the magnets will remain super-conducting and thus workable only as long as they are cooled to cryogenic temperatures -- close to absolute zero (0 degrees on the Kelvin scale, nearly -273 on the Centigrade scale, nearly 460 degrees below zero on the Fahrenheit scale).

The propulsion system of the ship is a field drive. This is not a rocket at all, and actually hasn't been invented yet. But in essence the field drive takes the energy output from the CTR's and converts it directly to acceleration and motion. This is analogous to moving a paper clip along a sheet of paper by pulling it with a small magnet; the field drive uses electromagnetic and gravitic forces, rather than the simple pressure and reaction forces of a rocket.

The CTR's need hydrogen for fuel, and this is obtained by "scooping" hydrogen from the interstellar space that the ship is moving through. This is akin to the air scoops on a jet engine. However, since there's only about one hydrogen atom per cubic centimeter (the volume of a sugar cube) in interstellar space, the hydrogen scoops will have to be vast. (By way of contrast, there are some 10 (to the 19th power) atoms per cc in the air you're breathing -- that's ten billion billion atoms in each cubic centimeter of sea-level air.) The hydrogen scoop -- or the ship will have to be several thousand kilometers across. Thankfully, it needn't be a material structure. It can be a huge shaped magnetic field, carried by gossamer filaments of superconducting wire that stretch out ahead of the ship in a funnel or fan shape. The wires may pulsate visibly, flickering with light. There may also be a laser fanning back and forth, its pencil beam of light being used to ionize the hydrogen atoms so that they can be "scooped" up by the magnetic field. The hydrogen atoms that are ionized by the laser beam are turned into ions -- atomic nuclei that have lost their electrons -- and the freed electrons themselves. (The ions have a positive electrical charge, the electrons have a negative charge.)

Since the propulsion system was damaged when the ship suffered its accident, the ship is drifting out of control. But it is still moving at about one-third of the speed of light (which is 186,000 miles per second), so that it is still scooping plenty of hydrogen to fuel the CTR's and provide basic electrical and other forms of power for all ship's systems. Since the ship is traveling

In a near-perfect vacuum, it will continue to move at its present speed indefinitely, unless acted upon by outside forces -- such as the gravitational attraction of a nearby star.

The CTR's also make very effective waste recyclers, and in this role they are called Fusion Torches. The star-hot plasma of the CTR can vaporize any material brought close to it. Thus all the ship's waste can be flash vaporized in the Fusion Torch and reduced to ionized atoms. These can then be reclaimed while they're still in the gaseous phase) and separated into pure elements: a salami sandwich, for example, going through the Fusion Torch would come out as a group of carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, oxygen, etc., atoms -- all neatly separated and ready to be redirected in any way the ship needs them. Thus Just about everything on the ship can be recycled.

Gravitic Control

Although nobody presently knows how to build a gravity generator, we assume that the ship has machines that can produce gravity at will. Thus there is no problem of weightlessness aboard the ship -- unless we want certain sections to be weightless, or have a low or extra-high gravity. Gravitational forces can be manipulated by the gravity generators. What would a gravity generator look like? Chances are it would be about the size of a moderately large desk, very dense and thus not portable, and surrounded by banks of electrical power converters and very powerful superconducting magnets.

Command and Control

In one of the smaller domes aboard the ship there are the bridge, central computer facility, and crew's quarters -- that is the crew that runs the ship. Presumably, this section was heavily damaged or destroyed outright in whatever calamity damaged the ship.

However, just as in a naval warship, there must be an auxiliary bridge and backup computer facility located elsewhere aboard the ship. But they have not been activated. The computer memory banks can be stored anywhere, and would probably have a high degree of redundancy - - that is, there would be duplicate memory banks spotted in various locations throughout the ship, since the memory bank essentially contains all the information necessary to the ship's functioning, the colonists' well being, etc.

Access to the memory bank is made through terminals that can be

either voice activated or keyboard activated. These terminals should look like pushbutton phone outlets set into walls of the tube tunnels or table tops elsewhere, with small picture screens and speaker grills beside them.

Transportation

Within each environmental dome, the transportation systems employed are consistent with the culture of that group of colonists. But in the tube tunnels, the ship's transportation system can consist of gravitic transporters, or "bounce tubes," where a person merely steps into the proper area and is whisked along, or up, or down -- more or less like a person falling from a height. But the end of the journey is a pleasant and feather-soft stop -- somewhat better than landing on the ground from a parachute jump.

There can also be conveyor belts, or sideways; and various forms of carts tractors, etc. These would be using electrical motors.

Tube Corridors

The tube corridors, or tube tunnels, have many vital functions in addition to physically linking the various environmental domes together. In essence, the tubes can be thought of as the equivalent of the underground systems that lie beneath any modern city: sewage, communications, transportation, water and fuel pipelines, etc.

Additionally, the tubes have an important environmental role to play. In interstellar space, the ship will generate more heat internally than it receives from outside sources, since it is far distant from any warming star. Most of this heat is generated by the CTR's and the environmental domes. Much of this heat must be dissipated, or temperatures inside the domes will rise to unlivable levels. The only way to get rid of the heat is to radiate it away into space.

The domes, by their shape, generate more internal heat than they can radiate away. The tubes, by their shape, make excellent radiators -- they have much more surface area in comparison to their internal volume than the domes do. Thus the tubes carry networks of heat-conducting piping along their outer skins. The heat conductor material! need be nothing more exotic than water; good old H₂O is still one of the best heat-

transfer materials known to man.

This heat transfer system in the tubes, then, has a vital effect on living conditions inside the environmental domes. If the heat transfer system isn't working efficiently, the dome will heat up -- perhaps a green forested world inside one of the domes will begin to suffer "heat waves" and drought. Alternatively, if the heat transfer system starts to overwork, a dome could become frozen. Like all the systems aboard the ship, the heat transfer system could be partially damaged by the catastrophe, and/or susceptible to human interference.

All of the ship's water, heat, air, waste, communications, and transportation systems are carried within the tubes.

The tubes are interconnected with the domes and each other by air-tight hatches. When the disaster struck the ship, all these hatches were automatically sealed, as part of the SOP of emergency procedures. These hatches have remained sealed since the disaster, effectively isolating the domes from each other.

A few of the hatches will begin to fail over the centuries and lose their airtight seal. One of them will be the hatch that Devon first notices in the opening episode.

Modular Concept

The ship is built of domes and tubes so that individual domes, or whole clusters of them, can be separated and placed in orbit about a planet -- if and when the colonists decide to do so. The domes themselves are not meant to land on any planetary surface -- flying a fifty-mile-wide object through a planet's atmosphere and touching down on virgin soil just ain't an inviting prospect.

So there are sections in or close to each dome in which are housed landing craft -- sleek-winged rocket shuttles similar to the Pan Am aerospace liner used in 2001.

There are also smaller one or two-man "tugs" that can be used to transfer cargo from the domes to the shuttles, to move about outside the ship for inspection and repair purposes, etc.

Spacesuits

A technology that can create fusion reactors and gravity

generators will probably be able to develop spacesuits that aren't the bulky monstrosities we now use. In fact, if we can control gravity, there's no reason why a person can't go out into vacuum surrounded by a "bubble" of room-temperature air. He can work in his shirtsleeves and carry nothing except a portable gravity generator (if this doesn't conflict with our earlier idea that the gravity generators would be small but heavy) and the tools he needs.

Alternatively, if a spacesuit is desirable, it could look more like a plastic see through garment, with a light bubble to enclose the head. The life support packs should become small enough to clip onto the belt.

Weapons

There's good reason to assume that the people who launched this ship would not want the colonists living in the domes to have any sophisticated weaponry at all. Perhaps the ship's crew had an arsenal at their disposal, but this would be mainly for police purposes. The kind of high-powered laser used as a "headlamp" for pre-ionizing hydrogen for the magnetic-field scoop could also make an effective weapon to defend the ship against alien and hostile visitors.

Within the ship, if any of the crew's original arsenal is found, the weapons should be antipersonnel but non-lethal. No "blasters" or deathrays. Sonic disruptors that temporarily incapacitate a person by spraying him with high-frequency sound waves. Alpha rhythm flashguns that flick a strobe light at the victim which amplifies the natural alpha rhythm of his brain and gives him a minor epileptic seizure. Dart guns that sedate a person. All these can easily be used as hand weapons.

Each of the individual cultures inside the various environmental domes will, of course, have developed weapons consistent with their own cultures. But here too there should be not-too-subtle differences. For example, you can make a crossbow that will stop an armored personnel carrier out of a truck's leaf spring and some of the connecting rods from the steering system. It's been done, in Biafra.

THE BACKSTORY CONTINUES

Whatever the nature of the "accident" that befell the Ark after one hundred years of traveling toward the far stars, it drastically altered the condition of life aboard the ship.

The builders of the Ark had purposely constructed the ship in such a way that the crew and the supercargo of settlers, in all their various cultures, one each to a dome, would have little contact. It was intended that each society should evolve in its own way, to preserve the best and the variety of life on earth.

But when the accident happened, killing almost all of the crew, it sealed off each dome so there was no contact whatsoever. In the hundred years since they had left the Earth, generations had been born and died in the domes, one having very little contact with another. Much like little street neighborhoods in New York, where someone who lives on West 82nd Street with its barber shop and market and shoe repair and local bar, will find himself in alien territory if he wanders over to 91st and Amsterdam.

Five hundred years passed after the accident. Five hundred years in which the last seed of humanity evolved in its disparate ways, with no outside contact, with only failing memories of the far green world from which they had come.

Until they forgot.

Forgot the Earth. Forgot the sun. Forgot the stars and space and that they were the last hope of humanity. They had their little worlds, each one fifty mile in diameter, and after a long time "Earth" was as foreign and mysterious a term to them as "Atlantis" or "Lemuria." It was a myth. A thing to tell children, a concept for Heaven.

But the reality for them was this:

We live in the world. The world is fifty miles in diameter. And it has metal walls and curves up overhead in a metal ceiling.

Forgotten: the Earth.

Forgotten: their mission.

Forgotten: that they are on board a starship.

Forgotten: that they travel through the universe on a pilotless course toward what?

All. All forgotten.

And each society developed in its own way. And in the domes where the ship's equipment had malfunctioned or broken down completely or been damaged strange worlds were born, to live out their lives in ways never known on Earth, with hard radiation and extreme cold and all the mysteries of physical space we don't even suspect now working their way on human flesh and animals and the soil and the very rocks of the mountains. Strange worlds indeed. One hundred of them. Containing a half million people and more – for there have been children, and their children's children -- all hurtling through emptiness at near-light-speed toward...

What?

It has been nine hundred years since we began this format. Six hundred in deep space.

Traveling with one hundred tiny nations of strangers, no two alike, bound outward toward new life or extinction. Nine hundred years, and we are now ready to take up our story where the first segment begins.

Traveling with THE STARLOST.

THE SERIES BEGINS

In a dome its inhabitants call Cypress Corners. They have named it that because of the beautiful cypress trees, of course, but no one remembers why it's called "Corners." It is a small town in a pleasant valley, surrounded by hills and lakes and farmlands.

It is, in fact, an almost one-for-one re-creation of an early 1800's Amish or Menonite community. With some very special differences. Religion has become as strict and ingrained and relentless as it was during the time of the Spanish inquisition. The town is ruled by the Council of Elders, an hereditary title, and they rule it with a stern and humorless hand. No dancing, no frivolity, work your twelve hours and pray your eight hours and sleep your eight hours, each day. What's that you say? That makes 28 hours in a day? Well, why not? It's an artificial sun hanging in a metal sky, and if you want to

leave it turned on for four extra hours each "day," why go ahead if the Elders say so.

It is a rigid, inflexible world where the reasonable tenets of the Protestant Work Ethic have been so concretized by fanatical adherence that here in Cypress Corners the lives of the people have had leached from them all light and joy and enrichment.

The focus of our series, and of the opening segments' story, is three young people:

Devon, played by Keir Dullea.

Rachel, played by Gay Rowan.

Garth

As is the custom in this world, children are promised in marriage from birth. Promised on the basis of genetic selection, as decided by computer readouts of hereditary factors. The Elders have supervised this function for as long as anyone can remember. In this way, the community and its population is kept stabilized. There are only six hundred people living in the world of Cypress Corners, only six hundred of the fifteen thousand originally set into this dome when the Ark was built.

There are no last names. You may wonder why. In a world of six hundred people, where order and lineal descendancy are all-important, there need only be one Devon, one Garth, one Rachel. If there is a boy-child, it is known as Young Devon and the father becomes Old Devon. When the father dies, Young Devon simply becomes Devon, until he has a boy-child, and then there is a new Young Devon and the father becomes Old Devon.

Young Rachel has been promised to Young Garth. That is the way of it. The Elders have said so. But there is a problem. They're still human beings, aren't they? Of course there are problems.

In this case, the problem is that Young Rachel loves Devon. And he loves her.

He goes to the Elders, and requests a re-evaluation of the mating situation. He is rebuffed and advised that this is merely one more instance of his atavistic, heretical behavior. Devon is an orphan. His parents died when their farm burned. Devon has worked out all his life. He is self-taught, sensitive, something of a dreamer. He asks the wrong questions: "Where do the

wastes we toss down the Trap go?" "Why is the sky metal and the ground soil?" "Why is Young Rachel forced to mate with a man she does not love?"

Devon rejects the rebuff, and in his search for a way around the edict, he discovers a secret the Elders have kept for hundreds of years: the computer that selects life-partners has been out of service for six generations. There is no reason why he cannot marry with Young Rachel.

As is his wont, Devon wanders into the hills to ponder what to do next. As he is walking through the hills, he stumbles and falls. When he looks to see why he tripped, he discovers an edge of metal protruding from the ground. He clears it away, and finds a strange, iris-like construction set into the soil. He doesn't know it, but it is one of the airlock tunnels provided by the builders of the Ark to provide access and egress for the repair crews, long since dead. The protuberance over which Devon tripped was the safety lock that was broken during the "accident," many hundreds of years before. Now, Devon, all unknowing, trips the mechanism that opens the iris. It swirls open and for the first time in the memory of his people, he looks down the tunnel that runs through the bottom of his world to where?

It is as if you were to suddenly discover a hatch in the wall of a mountain and open it to find out that the blue sky-green grass world you thought was "the World," was just a hollow sphere inside something larger.

Had it been another of his people who discovered it, and that might have happened in the past, one never knows, it would have been reported to the Elders and they would have maintained the secret. To them, it might even be the entrance to Hell.

But it is Devon who finds it, and he is a bit of a dreamer, a young man who asks the wrong sort of questions. He is too curious to ignore it. So he steps to the edge, and in an instant is sucked inside, whirled away and away and down without any sense of up or down or falling, just being pulled from his world.

From this point on, our story moves quickly, wonder crowding in on wonder.

Devon manages to free himself from the pull of the "bounce tube" and finds himself standing before a great port, hinged with pneumatic closures. Hanging on the wall is a transparent suit of clothes that looks like

eisinglas (Devon's world has no cellophane, it isn't biodegradable) and it has a bubble where the head should be. He doesn't know what it is and he ignores it as he opens the port.

It opens with difficulty and stays open only a few seconds as the hinges fight to close the port, as the rush of air that almost sucks Devon out fights to close the port, but in the instants that he stands there looking through the port he sees...

The universe.

The stars and the far galaxies, all shining and radiant as radioactive dust, spread out before him.

He is the first of the Ark's prisoners to see, in six hundred years, the world that lies outside.

In a subjective sequence of images that stretch the few seconds of view (so we don't contradict the physical laws that say he would die from the vacuum into which the tunnel's air is rushing), Devon perceives what no one else on board the Ark perceives:

That they are inside something, traveling through a greater place. He has discovered the Universe.

Pondering the nature of all this new data rushing in on him, Devon realizes the "funny suite" on the wall must serve to be worn in such a room as the one that lies on the other side of this port. He dons it, opens the port, and, holding on to the wall-supports so he is not whisked into space, he enters what was once an observation port on the outside of a service dome. He panics as the port sighs shut behind him, and then, as the air is gone, he hangs there inside the ruined bubble, staring out through the shattered view window, at the enormity of space.

He sees another port, and gets through it. Finds himself in another tunnel, travels its length, and comes to yet another closure which he opens.

He enters into semi-darkness and finds himself in one of the computer terminal stations that contain all the knowledge of the ship, its people, the past.

The memory cubes are simple devices, and he plays with them, fascinated by their coruscating colors, their odd shape, their peculiar feel. And one of them activates and begins telling him of the ship, how it came to be built, who he is, and where he is bound.

It tells him, in short, the backstory of the series.

And telling him, advises through the wonder of the memory cubes, that whatever the nature of the "accident," the Ark, and all contained within it, are headed on a course that will take them directly into the burning core of a distant star. The original course was impaired, no one steers this 200-mile-long behemoth, and is ineluctably as the press of time, the last seed of humanity is doomed to die within six years Earth-time unless the course can be changed.

Devon proceeds through the ship through other tunnels and finds himself, finally, in the ruined control dome. There, standing amid the ruins of the captain's Bridge, in a dome like a Cathedral, he understands the enormity of the task before him. He must return to Cypress Corners and tell the Elders what he has found, what the world is really like, that they are merely motes inside a giant vessel, moving on a dead course for destruction.

Painfully, slowly, discovering new wonders at every turn, he returns.

But when he goes to tell the Elders, he is accused of being a heretic, of denying the Maker who made this world fifty miles wide for peace and tranquility. They sentence him to death for heresy.

How can he convince these blind and inflexible fools that The Maker was a metallurgist who devised the techniques for structuring titanium alloys so they would never rust or corrode or deteriorate? How can he tell them The Maker was an environmentalist who had plotted their tiny world on graphs and set it up to run for thousands of years without breaking down? How can he tell them The Maker was a philanthropist who, knowing he would die when the Earth died, donated all his vast fortunes to setting this metal ship afloat in the sea of space. How can he tell them there is a Creator greater than all the other Makers who were merely craftsmen?

He is doomed to die, and Garth comes to him in his cell. They talk. They are friends, even though they are both involved with the same woman. Garth tells him, for the first time, that he does not love Young Rachel, that he is sorry it worked out this way, and that under different circumstances he would have been pleased to see Devon and Young Rachel together.

That night, Young Rachel helps Devon escape. In the night

they flee, and Devon knows that there is no longer any place left for him in Cypress Corners. He tells Rachel of the bounce tube, of the wonders that lie beneath the soil, of the ship and their past. She cannot believe it, but she loves him and trusts him. She goes with him.

Understand the society from which Devon and Rachel and Garth come: everything is ordered, everything is religious, everything is a matter of "face." The Elders cannot permit Devon to roam free. And the one who must find him, bring him back or kill him is -- Garth.

Devon ran off with Garth's promised mate, Devon has insulted Garth, Garth and Garth's family will lose face in the community. So Garth is set the task of finding and killing Devon, even though in his heart he feels no malice. He didn't want Rachel. But, like so many of us, he is a slave to his culture and the arbitrary and frequently-outmoted mores of that culture. Garth tracks them. He finds the bounce tubes. He follows them.

Thus begins the journey.

Rachel and Devon, trying to find the control computers that pilot the Ark's passage, trying to find a culture in which they can enlist aid to save humanity, trying to find a way to save the last spark of life thrown off by the dying ember that was the Earth.

Garth, stalking them, forced by circumstance and breeding to kill Devon if he finds him, to bring Rachel back, to doom his people, himself, and all the thousands onboard to a sudden and what will be to them inexplicable doom.

WHAT KINDS OF STORIES WOULD WE LIKE TO TELL

Stories with relation to the world today. Stories of people in conflict. No monster stories and no pure gadget stories. None of the sorts of things you saw on the science-fiction TV shows you loathed. Stories in which human problems link in tightly with the ever-present "overstory" of the last of humanity, THE STARLOST, on their endless, unknowing voyage.

Stories that take place in different cultures, in weird and bizarre and even sometimes familiar worlds. No old West cowboy worlds and no 1920's bootlegger worlds as other shows have done, but shows that can use familiar elements of our past and present, altered, changed, put in context of the Ark and what it has on board.

One dome might contain living crystals that were once merely salt or sugar, so altered by centuries and the strangenesses of radiation that they have become almost sentient dream crystals that can make a person's thoughts spring to life. In such a world Devon and Garth and Rachel would only have their actualized fears to fight.

In another dome they might find children who had been made immortal, frozen at the age of their adolescence, the remnants of a crèche, forced by survival to build a children's fantasy world.

In another they might find a rigidly militaristic culture. Patterned after the armies of Charlemagne, or Attila, or even Hitler.

In another they may find that the deckplates between two domes have been broken through and the societies of one have been waging a feud with the other for six hundred years, in a Hatfield-McCoy parallel.

In another they may find mutated animals who had evolved to the stage where they were the dominant life-form, a society of intelligent apes or dogs or insects yet still, weirdly, unforgettably, somehow human.

In another they might be worshipped as Gods who came from the sky.

In another they might be in a society ruled by the robots who had been originally set to the menial chores of loading supplies, but who took over from their human masters.

In another they might find themselves in a purely feudal society, where monarchs rule and knights joust with lances made from crossbeams of the Ark's superstructure.

There is no end to the sorts of stories we can tell. In some, Garth will be stalking Devon and Rachel, providing the jeopardy that parallels jeopardizes found on that particular world. In others Garth will be forced to join up with those he stalks, merely to stay alive. And they will be separated in some stories Garth and Devon paralleling each other in their attempts to find what they are seeking. In one episode Rachel will dominate, in another Devon, in yet another Garth. In this way we can keep story-lines alive and viable. And we can build concern for our three young, fascinating characters.

Who will write these stories?

Well, I, as Creator (how I love that cap C) will write six, including the first of the series, which will be a two-parter establishing the basic concepts. Twenty others will be written by the best Canadian scenarists to be found.

And all of the stories will be springboarded by original storylines commissioned from the leading science-fiction writers of the world. Names like A.E. Van Vogt, Frank Herbert, Joanna Russ, Thomas M. Disch, Alexei Panshin, Philip K. Dick and many others. Each story will emerge from the special dreams of those who have made a profession of the imaginative, they will be delivered into the tender mercies of fine Canadian scriptwriters, they will be made accurate scientifically by Ben Bova, and they'll be ramrodded by myself. Then the words will be turned into living visions through the magics of Douglas Trumbull, easily the top sorcerer in the field of videotape and special effects. Doug is the man responsible for the amazing visuals in 2001, Silent Running and The Andromeda Strain. Thought and execution are the keynotes of Doug's method, and he has created entirely new visual techniques to make whatever you envision spring to life.

With your help, we will make the voyage of THE STARLOST a long and memorable one.

THE PRINCIPALS

Devon: is Keir Dullea

Tall, quick, intelligent and -- this is the keynote word -- resourceful. He is not cut from the impossible and unbelievable mold of mightily-thewed warriors, but speaks by his entire nature to the hero in each of us, average and ordinary humans thrown into the burning center of events that demand heroism and ingenuity.

He can be surprised and awed, but he will not consider supernatural that which he doesn't at first understand. He is a pragmatist, but a dreamer.

He learns quickly, remembers lessons learned, and only resorts to violence when all other, more intelligent avenues are closed to him. He feels deeply, he can be hurt, he can cry, he can laugh. He is simply put a man like all men. He has no superhuman powers, and he will not be required to act in a manner that has come to be known in television as "the protagonist ever-triumphant." He can fail, he can be saved, he can err, and lose no points for it. He can even look the fool occasionally. Don't we all. Occasionally?

He is a product of an agarian society, remember, and he is frequently innocent, even naive. But he learns fast.

Rachel: is Gay Rowan

A girl you will remember. Because Rachel will change from the outset of the series through its various segments, in the way modern women are changing. Reared to be a chattel, an unthinking toy for the man she marries, a pretty thing who tends house, Rachel will become a self-reliant, witty, resourceful woman of quick intelligence and enormous personal stores of strength. She will change more than either of the men, and in some ways her character will be the most fascinating. Because we live in a time when the role of women is changing, and Rachel will be a paradigm for today's woman, shucking off the fetters of ancient preconceptions as to what a woman is, building for herself a personality and an ambience that will make her memorable. She will not be the tittering courtesan, nor the helpless Fay Wray-like victim, whimpering helplessly.

She will be a strong and determined woman who has a mission that she has come to believe in. A woman who has perceived the futility and pointlessness of her former

life, and subscribed to a new way of life that demands
fleetness of foot and thought if she is to survive.