

## CHARACTER — G'KAR (*Excerpt*)

*G'Kar is so theatrical - do you really think aliens would act like that?*  
2/19/94

That's who he is. I like theatrical characters. I know many in real life that're much bigger than life, very broad...and great fun. Not every character has to be sonorous and serious and restrained. The whole point of \*having\* alien characters is that they should act differently than the majority of us.

*About how old is G'Kar supposed to be?*  
5/3/94

I believe G'Kar is about 50-60 in Earth terms, which is early middle age for Narns.

*Is G'Kar married? And What exactly does he mean by his "pleasure threshold"?* 3/15/94

Yes, he does have a wife, who may or may not show up in year two.  
  
What does he mean by pleasure threshold? This is one of those questions that can only be answered through demonstration....

*Are we hearing a soft "g" or a "zh," and why isn't that a hard "g"?*

I'd always conceived that the name was pronounced GUH-kar. Andreas started pronouncing it SHUH-kar. I asked him why. Andreas shrugged and said that he'd decided his character was French.

*It seems that his political appointment carries weight in a different way than, say, Londo's. It's like he is the voice of the Narn Regime on the station.*  
1/8/95

Your political assessment is more or less correct. The Narn idea of an ambassador isn't just someone who SPEAKS for his people, he REPRESENTS his people on every level. (So the strain and pressure is quite great.) As such, he is the highest-ranking representative on B5; he is responsible for taking care of the ceremonies of G'Quan, was appointed by the Kha'Ri, and can only be removed by the Kha'Ri, or by direct physical challenge.

*Why doesn't G'Kar have  
an aide anymore?*  
11/14/96

I briefly considered giving G'Kar a second, after the revolving door Na'Toths, but as I looked at it...as you say, the others all DO have one like that, and I figured it might be good to have someone \*without\* that...especially after the fall of Narn, when the staff would be canceled. And there's something I like about G'Kar being alone in all this. Anyway, it varies the mix a bit.

*Was it ever revealed why  
a member of the Kha'ri  
was serving as a lowly  
ambassador on B5?*  
2/2/98

G'Kar's position was widely known; the Kha'ri is a large group like Parliament, as opposed to a 9 person, secretive ruling body.

## CHARACTER — KOSH (Excerpt)

*How is Kosh's last name,  
"Naranek," pronounced?*  
1/18/93

Pronounced Nuh-RAH-nek.

*How does Kosh move in  
his encounter suit? Is it  
important for us to know  
this?*  
1/15/93

Actually, for the pilot in particular, Kosh only has to move very stately and slowly from point A to point B, so there wasn't much that needed to be told. For a longer period, on the series, he would be played more as a cypher...the less that can be revealed, the better. The only people directly involved who had to know was the director (for certain attitudes) and the costume designer (to incorporate certain elements and leave room in appropriate sections).

*How did Kosh's encounter  
suit open for Kyle?*  
8/22/93

The encounter suit opened at the touch of a button (you can hear him press the button with a \*click\*). Only for Lyta did it open on its own.

*Hey, how come Kosh  
doesn't have an assistant?*  
6/27/94

Kosh doesn't need an assistant. In fact, no one's \*really\* quite sure what it is Kosh \*does\* most of the day.

*Is Kosh what he/she/it  
appears to be?*  
6/16/94

Kosh is always and forever \*exactly\* what he appears to be, no less and no more. At the same time, Kosh is absolutely \*nothing\* like what he appears to be. These are not contradictory statements. And this is about the straightest answer I've given yet on the subject, believe it or not.

*What exactly does Kosh's  
Koshism, "Understanding  
is a three-edged sword"  
mean?*  
1/15/95

The metaphor functions on several levels: 1) in any argument, there is your side, and the other side, but if you're ever going to get past that and find agreement, or understanding, you must be open to a third idea, a compromise or intercession. 2) a real three-bladed or three-edged sword creates a wound that does not close again; knowledge, once received, and understood, is permanent and changes you forever.

*Kosh is not being cryptic.  
You just need to listen  
closely to what he's  
saying.*  
3/4/95

Ah, at \*last\* someone who understands Kosh. Yes, that is precisely it. Of all the lines I write in the course of an episode, the ones that take the longest are always Kosh's lines; anyone can be cryptic; that's easy. You have to kind of re-hardwire your brain to think like Kosh thinks. He sees directly to the point of what the issue is, and that we sometimes can't follow has nothing to do with him being mysterious, as it does with just not being able to stand back and look objectively; clear seeing, as they say in Zen.

There's an old Zen saying; when you are hungry, eat; when you are

tired, sleep; this way will you confound your enemies. Kosh's dialogue tends to be a stone dropped into water that drops straight down. The more I can pare down his dialogue to just what is \*absolutely essential\* the more it is Kosh.

## CHARACTER — SINCLAIR (Excerpt)

*Why couldn't Sinclair's role have been portrayed by a woman? Or anyone other than a white male?*  
12/30/93

As for the commander...I could answer your question in more detail, but I can't without blowing a lot of what's being prepared. He isn't just male by default, or by auctorial preference (though certainly I will be putting in a lot of my own background into him, and into Garibaldi); there is a very specific reason why he has to be male. As for being Caucasian, we auditioned from every group looking for the right person who did the best job in the audition. He was the best for that part. That's really about as deep as it goes. We were prepared to cast whoever walked in the door and nailed the part. That was Michael.

*Sinclair is very believable as a pilot; does Michael O'Hare have any flying experience?*  
10/15/93

As it happens, btw, Michael O'Hare's brother is a Commander in the Gunfighters fighter squadron, running weapons, mainly, and flying an F-14. At some point we'll probably stick him in a B5 cockpit, and stick Michael in an F-14 cockpit...

*Some quibbles: Sinclair doesn't have much going on in the way of personality.*  
1/18/94

A few small quibbles with your quibbles: In "Midnight," Sinclair is really not given a chance to show his character, since it's basically a reintroduction to the series, and there is a lot to cover. He functions throughout the episode only in his official capacity. In other episodes, you'll get to see some very different sides to his character, particularly in "Parliament of Dreams."

*Delenn has called Sinclair a "true seeker." What is he seeking?*  
10/1/94

What is Sinclair seeking? What are we \*all\* seeking? Answers, and purpose, and the second half of the sentence beginning with the word "Why."

*What kind of education has Sinclair had?*  
4/21/94

Sinclair was taught by Jesuits....

*What's Sinclair's middle name?* 6/8/94

Jeffrey Sinclair's middle name is David, same as his father's first name.

## *PHYSICS & B5 (Excerpt)*

*Looking at the CGI Starfury launch sequence, it looks like an error to me. That can't work!*  
11/3/93

I'm sorry, but I don't agree that this is an error. This launch scenario is the best one suggested by some of the techie types we've gone to.

In addition, you want to fire with the nose facing out because you want to get the engines going as quickly as possible, once you're clear of the bay, to get the ship \*outward\* as soon as possible, because the primary docking bay is at the "front" of the station, and you don't want to have a flight of fighters entering your primary traffic lane. The noses of the furies when released are pointing in the "down" direction of centrifugal force, and that's the direction in which they should be released. Nor would they travel diagonally along the station in any event; they'd go at a nominal curve away from the cobra launch bays much the same as a rock tied to a string flies away from you when you release it after whirling it around your head. This works, and makes the most common, and scientific sense.

*All this talk of errors in the Starfury launch sequence...but I think I actually get what you are going for. You're not trying to catapult the ships, but rather using the station's rotation to assist?*

11/6/93

*That Starfury launch sequence looks wrong...*

5/1/94

*JMS explains relative motion in space.*

7/26/94

Yes, this is what we were going for. The use of outward force to push the fighters away from the station (rotational force) has nothing to do with catapulting the ships, it's just a low-fuel, high-economy way of getting the ships away by taking advantage of the station's rotation, so they can fire their engines at a safe distance from the station. It's the fastest way overall to launch a whole bunch of fighters while leaving the primary docking bay clear for larger ships.

About every couple of months, the question is raised about whether or not the starfuries fall correctly. Everybody does the math, we go back and forth, and it ends up that yes, they fall correctly.

One sidelight to the speed question...it's sometimes hard to judge speed when there are no handy landmarks. The shuttle moves with INCREDIBLE speed as it orbits Earth...but to look at it from any of the nearby cameras, when they do a spacewalk, you can't tell it's moving at ALL. Basically, we're between a rock and a hard place; if we portrayed motion a la the Space Shuttle, nothing would seem to move; if we portrayed the pure speed AS pure speed, using some kind of landmarks or visual cues, it would go by SO fast that you \*wouldn't be able to see it\*. If you're moving at 15 clicks a second...it's gone by the time you look at it.

## *SOUND DESIGN (Excerpt)*

*Are all of the sounds you use on the show created in-house? What's the process like? 8/4/95*

Yes, insofar as I know, all the sounds we use in B5 for items we created (PPGs, hyperspace, starfuries, shadow ships, on and on) are original creations.

Hyperspace was a real toughie.

One thing I wanted was a kind of hollow sound, like when you cup your hands over your ears. So the sound designer put together a LOT of different sounds, including putting a condom over a microphone and putting it deep into his swimming pool. (How he explained the open condom wrappers to his wife later is anyone's guess. "No, really, I needed them to do some sound design.")

I kept a fairly tight rein on sound stuff in the beginning, until the sound designers caught what we were after, and now mainly what happens is that when we do the audio spotting for the episode, we stop at a point where a new sound is needed, or we introduce a new locale in the station and have to discuss the audio mapping. We talk about it in general terms, unless I have something terribly specific in mind, and the sound folks go off and do it, and I don't think I've had much of a problem with anything they've done.

Sometimes, a sound will consist of various pieces, and when we get in to do the final audio mix, I/we may go through the pieces and if there's a conflict between a sound effect and a music cue (if both are taking up the same space in the low end), we may adjust the sound effect or omit one of the pieces to carve out room in the audio and make sure they don't just mush together. This is particularly true given that Chris Franke often incorporates lots of

natural (and unnatural) sounds in his music, and we have to make sure to give emphasis to the right one for the dramatic moment.

*Who voices the station computers?*  
11/5/94

The voice of B5 is done by Haley, our script-person on the set.

*I know that in crowd scenes in movies, the background conversation is usually something like "rhubarb and celery" said over and over. How about background alien conversation?*  
11/24/92

Spent last night writing alien walla. What, you ask, is alien walla? Well, when you have a crowd scene, you should be able to hear bits and pieces of conversations, just in background, also voices on intercoms, that sort of thing. And you can't just have people making the stuff up as they go, during looping. So somebody has to write it. That would be me.

So there I am, a grown man, writing lines of dialogue like "Ni tupa, dogaren?" for page after page, and trying to be consistent and build an informal interlac dictionary. And you start to get goofy after a while...in the customs area, I had someone saying "Riten venyoo finewerk," which looks non-English until you say it aloud and it comes out, "Write when you find work."

I need a vacation.

### *PSI CORPS (Excerpt)*

*How do telepaths come to Psi Corps? Do they usually wait until adulthood, or must they join earlier?*  
12/29/94

There are genetic tests that check for the gene, which can be present or recessive; also, there's a network by which people who think they are telepathic, and thus troubled, can contact the Corps for help. The vast majority of PC members come to them in very early childhood.

*I thought telepaths aren't  
allowed to scan the  
accused; didn't Lyta do  
that in the pilot?*  
1/18/94

A telepath is allowed to function neither way, to scan someone to determine he's innocent, or to act as accuser.

You mention the pilot, but *\*in\** the pilot, Lyta didn't scan Sinclair. She scanned a *\*victim\** of a potential crime. She was not asked to go in and look for the killer, she was asked to find out how the poison got into Kosh's system. A telepath can do this. (A telepath can, in some situations, also scan a victim unable to testify for physical reasons to find out who did the act, as I said before, **\*\*BUT\*\*** that must still be backed up with physical evidence, you can't just take the telepath's word for it, there **MUST** be physical evidence.)

All of which is why, in the pilot, it was *\*also\** stipulated that the information gained was "inadmissible" (in Kyle's testimony).

*I can't understand how  
the Psi Corps isn't allowed  
to just render judgments  
on the accused; it seems  
like that would be a really  
efficient system.*  
1/25/94

Let's have a moment of logic. Does anyone here think that the Judicial System will, for a *\*moment\**, let another government agency come into their courts with pronouncements of guilt or innocence? Lawyers wouldn't have it, judges wouldn't have it, the Supreme Court would rule against it. Also, please remember that the Corps is viewed with some measure of suspicion by the rest of the government. As you'll see in the course of the series. They aren't perceived automatically as the Good Guys.

You **MUST** set up checks and balances, and policies. You can't say, "Okay, a telepath can scan sometimes, but not others, with some people, but not others." The law is a defined creature. A telepath *\*may not\** scan someone accused of a crime, and have that as admissible evidence. A telepath *\*may\** scan a victim who is unable to remember the events of a crime, **BUT**...that is not admissible in its own terms, it must then be bolstered with actual, physical

evidence. Even an eyewitness testimony can be challenged, and hearsay evidence is open to challenge as well, there are \*already\* limitations on second-party testimony.

Allowing the Psi Corps to function within a criminal court setting is one step removed from tyranny, and a government controlled court. If you actually look at the \*reality\* of it...it wouldn't happen. And that is the position we're taking with our series. Is it debatable? Of course it's open to debate. We like fostering debate. Is everything fair? No, it's not, just as in life. But as someone said (actually, the person looking on over my shoulder as I type this), it's my show....

### *BEHIND-THE-SCENES (Excerpt)*

*Is there any sort of  
unofficial B5 crew  
greeting?  
11/16/93*

Our head of post production, associate producer George Johnsen, pulled a number on me today that just struck me as hilarious, and I pass it on to you. (We do a lot of silly stuff behind the scenes.)

Take your hands. Fold in the thumb until it's pointing in toward the palm of your hand, but not entirely. Fan out your other four fingers on each hand as far as you can. Now put the two hands together so that the index fingers touch, and the pinkies are on either side of one another (i.e., you've formed a crown or fan). Raise your hands so that your wrists are settling on either side of the top of your head.

Now look at the person sitting next to you and say, "Live, Londo,

and Prosper." This is the unofficial B5 crew greeting. Apparently some have been doing it when they arrive for work in the morning.

We're a sick bunch, but we're fun.

*JMS talks about crickets  
on set causing production  
stoppages.  
10/9/93*

You wanna hear really dopey? Of all the things that can bug you -- literally, in this case -- it's always the small ones that get under your skin. The goofy ones.

Take crickets for instance.

Crickets. Cute little critters, welcoming the twilight, equipped with top hat and umbrella to usher Pinocchio into his long-sought humanity.... Crickets.

Ah hates crickets.

A cricket family -- at least one that we know of -- moved into a corner of one of our sets. The medlab, to be precise. Now, when we're moving things around, building stuff, moving stuff, it's silent, as a cricket will generally be when made nervous. But make it all nice and quiet -- as you would do for, say, filming -- and he becomes downright rambunctious. And sure enough, there it is, deep in the audio background on a few shots. Oh, we can hide the audio easily enough...but Getting The Cricket has become something of a cause around here.

We absolutely cannot find him. I stood back there for ten minutes, eyes closed, trying to triangulate and draw a bead on the little sucker. We've tried exterminators, smoke, nitrogen, assassins and psychics; we've tried scaring him and coaxing him, to no avail. He is as invisible as god but with a MUCH louder voice.

You ever fire up a daily to hear, at the top of the take, the off screen director saying, as fast as he can, "Okaythecricket'ssilent, ACTION!"

Like I said...not really a problem, just one of those little things that niggle at you when there's nothing else going on. So we're going to wait him out.

Anybody know offhand the life span of your average cricket...?

*When you returned to shoot the series after the pilot, how did the cast get back into character after such a long break?*

10/12/93

Because it had been so long since the pilot, it took a few of our actors a bit of time to get back into their characters, to find the characters' "fingerprints" for lack of a better term. This is quite understandable given the long waiting period. When he needed to find his character for a scene, Peter Jurasik mentioned that he would just stand up straight and yell, "MISter GariBALdi!" and he'd be right back in character. Sort of the B5 version of "Shazam!"

Minus the lightning bolt, of course.

**End of 12 page sample of excerpts**

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