

Generic Radio Workshop Script Library (BACK)**Series: X Minus One****Show: A Pail of Air****Date: Mar 28 1956***Transcript courtesy of Mikeplays*

CAST:

ANNOUNCER

BUD, in his teens

MA, often delirious, not entirely in touch with reality

PA, well-educated, quiet and practical

SIS, in her early teens; a little self-absorbed

MAN, a little stiff

WOMAN, warm, intuitive

SOUND: HIGH-PITCHED ELECTRONIC HUM ... JOINED BY ELECTRONIC BEEPING IN AGREEMENT WITH COUNTDOWN

ANNOUNCER: Countdown for blast-off. X minus five, four, three, two. X minus one. Fire.

SOUND: A MOMENT'S SILENCE ... THEN ROCKET SHIP BLASTS OFF

MUSIC: BUILDS VERTIGINOUSLY TO A CLIMAX ... THEN IN BG

ANNOUNCER: From the far horizons of the unknown come transcribed tales of new dimensions in time and space. These are stories of the future, adventures in which you'll live in a million could-be years on a thousand may-be worlds. The National Broadcasting Company, in cooperation with Galaxy Science Fiction Magazine, presents -- (HEAVY ECHO) X Minus One!

MUSIC: TO A CLIMAX ... THEN OUT

ANNOUNCER: Tonight's story, "A Pail of Air" by Fritz Leiber.

MUSIC: SOMBER ... THEN BEHIND BUD--

BUD: (NARRATES) It was pretty quiet in the Nest. Pa was just sitting by the fire, staring into it like he does these days. And Ma was asleep. That's why it was so quiet. Ma has some pretty bad times when she just screams and screams and huddles back against the blankets that line the Nest. Sis was looking at herself in the mirror that hangs next to the bookshelf. I don't know what she finds to look at so long, but -- then she's a girl. She just looks at herself.

Saturdays, when Pa puts a couple of extra lumps of coal on the fire and we take a bath, she looks at herself in the mirror and sometimes she cries. I dropped the book I was reading and I guess that woke Ma.

SOUND: BOOK DROPS ON FLOOR ... (NOTE: A WIND WHISTLES QUIETLY IN THE BACKGROUND OF ALL THE SCENES IN THE NEST)

MA: (WAKES) Huh? What? What?

PA: Pick up the book, Bud.

BUD: I'm sorry, Pa.

MA: It's come back. Hasn't it, Alfred? It's come back.

PA: It was just Bud; he dropped his book.

MA: But it's come back. It's out there now, isn't it? I feel a lot warmer.

PA: Now, Ethel--

MA: It's - it's up there in the sky. Just the way it always was. I know. I - I had a dream, Alfred.

PA: I know, dear. Sis, melt your mother a cup of water.

SIS: I'm combing my hair.

PA: (INSISTS) Sis.

SIS: Oh, all right.

MA: I've got to get up. I - I know it's there. There'll be crocuses. And the spring bulbs. And daffodils.

BUD: What are daffodils, Ma?

MA: Well, Buddy, they're-- Oh, they're a flower. And they're very pretty. Yellow, on a tall green stalk. Oh, I want to go out. I - I want to take the children out.

PA: All right now, Ethel. Here's some water.

MA: Come on, children! We'll all go out and you can play in the sun.

BUD: (HUMORS HER) Sure, Ma.

SIS: Here, drink the water, Ma.

MA: It's cold, Alfred. You rap on the pipes and make that super send up some more heat.

BUD: What's a super, Pa?

PA: It doesn't matter, Bud. There aren't any anymore.

BUD: Oh.

SIS: Pa, the pail's running low.

PA: Bud, you better get into your things and go out and get an extra pail of air.

BUD: There are a couple of pails behind the first blankets.

PA: Go on. Get into your things.

MA: (WEEPS QUIETLY) It isn't back, is it?

PA: (SYMPATHETIC) No, it isn't.

MA: There's no sun in the sky. No sun, is there?

SIS: No, Ma. What was it like, the sun?

PA: Sis, don't get your Ma upset.

MA: The sun was yellow, and so bright you couldn't look at it. Burning hot. So hot. But when you stretched out in it, it made you feel warm all over. Tingly warm. Been so long since I've been that warm.

SIS: I was warm last year on my birthday when Pa put all that extra coal on.

MA: (INCREASINGLY EMOTIONAL) And then every morning, it would come out of the east. Make the clouds all pink and yellow. And the mist would rise from the ground and then - slowly, everything would glow, warmer. Warmer. And then it would be up there in the sky. Shining. Warm. (WEEPS QUIETLY)

PA: Hurry up, Bud.

BUD: I'm almost ready, Pa.

MA: (AN OUTBURST) I want the sun! I want the sun back! (PAUSE, QUIETLY) Alfred? Get me the sun.

PA: It's gone, Ethel. There's nothing I can do.

MA: For Christmas? Or my birthday?

PA: Go ahead, Bud. Take the big pail and get it full this time. There's no sense in taking the trip for only half a bucket of air.

BUD: (APOLOGETIC) I spilled it the last time.

MA: (ANOTHER OUTBURST) It's dark, Alfred! It's dark! (WEEPS EXTRAVAGANTLY IN BG)

PA: Go ahead, Bud!

BUD: Strap down the helmet, will ya, Sis?

SIS: (FUSSING WITH HELMET) For goodness sakes, stand up straight.

SOUND: HELMET SECURED

BUD: (FROM UNDER HELMET) Okay. All right, I'll be right back.

PA: Don't hold the blankets open too long.

MA: (STOPS WEeping)

SOUND: BUD'S FOOTSTEPS AWAY

PA: (SOOTHING) It's all right, Ethel. We're all safe. Bud'll be right back with another pail of air. It's all right.

MUSIC: TRANSITION ... THEN IN BG

BUD: (NARRATES) I went through the thirty or so blankets that Pa hung up to slow down the air escaping from the Nest.

Course I knew the way. I've been going out for air since I was a kid. Still, I get a funny crawly feeling every time I go out of the Nest.

You gotta go up to the fifth floor which is just above the blanket of frozen air. You see, when the Earth got cold, all the water in the air froze first and made a blanket about ten feet thick or so. And then down on top of that dropped all the crystals of frozen air, making another blanket sixty or seventy feet thick.

I came out of the window we use on the fifth floor and started to scoop up the air into my pail. I had it about full -- boy, my fingers were getting pretty cold -- when I saw something.

MUSIC: ACCENT ... THEN IN BG

SOUND: FIERCE WIND BLOWS, BEHIND--

BUD: (EXCLAIMS, TO HIMSELF) Hey! That's a light! Darn it, I kicked over the bucket. There can't be a light -- not moving around in a window like that. There can't be. Ma, Pa, and Sis are back in the Nest. I'm up here and and there can't be anyone else. Everybody on Earth is dead except us.

SOUND: WIND OUT

MUSIC: UP, TO FILL A TENSE PAUSE ... THEN IN BG

BUD: (NARRATES) I had an idea how Ma must feel sometimes, the way she sees things. But there it was, moving around in the building across the way. I stood there shaking and I almost froze my feet. I did frost my helmet so solid on the inside I couldn't see anything. So I hurried up and scooped up another bucket of air and headed back for the Nest as fast as I could.

MUSIC: UP, FOR A TRANSITION

BUD: Pa! Pa! I saw something!

PA: Go on, hang those outside clothes up by the fire.

BUD: (WHILE HANGING UP CLOTHES) Whew! (EXCITED) Pa! I saw something! I did!

PA: (LOW) Sh! Your mother's quiet now. Don't upset her.

BUD: Pa, it was a light.

PA: Wait till I get this air next to the fire. Give me the cloth, Sis.
(GRUNTS WITH EFFORT)

SOUND: PAIL PLACED

SIS: Shall I put another lump of coal on, Pa?

PA: No, no, the oxygen from this bucket will get the fire up when it begins to melt. There.

BUD: Pa, I'm trying to tell you. I saw something up there. Light.

SIS: There's lots of lights. Stars.

BUD:

I know what stars look like, dopey. They're big steady white lights in the sky. This was down here in a building.

MA: (OFF) What is it? Alfred, what is it?

PA: Nothing, nothing, Ethel. Now, what is this, Bud?

BUD: Well, first I thought it was a lady -- a young lady.

SIS: (LAUGHS)

BUD: Aw, I mean it! Like in one of those old magazines. I thought I saw it in a window. But then all I saw was a light.

PA: You watched it for some time, son?

BUD: Long enough for it to pass five windows and go to the next floor.

PA: And it didn't look like stray electricity?

BUD: No, Pa. I know what that looks like.

PA: Or a star refracted through an icicle? Sometimes if you catch it at the right angle, it--

BUD: Pa, honest! I never saw anything like it before.

PA: (PAUSE) All right. I'll go out with you and - you show me.

MA: No! No, Alfred! You can't go and leave us alone! Not both of you!

PA: It's all right. We'll be right back.

SIS: Here's your helmet, Pa.

MA: (PARANOID RAVING) There - there's something out there! I've always known there was something out there waiting to get us.

BUD: (IGNORES MA, TO SIS) Hand me my gloves.

MA: Something that's part of the cold! Hates all warmth! Wants to destroy the Nest! Been watching us all this time. Now - now it's coming after us. And it'll get you. And then it'll come for me. Oh, don't go! Alfred -- please don't go!

PA: Everything will be all right. (BEAT) Now, Sis--?

SIS: Yes, Pa?

PA: You come watch the fire. Keep an eye on that air, too. If it gets too low or doesn't seem to be boiling fast enough, get another bucket behind the blanket.

MA: Alfred, don't go!

SIS: I'll take care of it, Pa. Could there really be anybody out there?

PA: I don't see how. We heard the last radio voices a year before Bud was born. There hasn't been anything since then.

SIS: Then what could it be?

PA:

I don't know. Probably - just a reflection. An ice crystal cracking.
(BEAT) Come on, Bud. Get your helmet on.

MUSIC: TRANSITION ... THEN BEHIND BUD--

BUD: (NARRATES) It's funny. When I go out alone, I'm not scared or anything. But when I go out with Pa, I always hang on to his belt like I used to when I was a little kid. Habit, I guess. It's the same no matter what trip we take.

On the fifth floor, we stopped to rest just before we went out. We were in the room with the frozen people. The lady sitting looking at the door. The man holding his hands over that funny metal thing Pa calls a radiator. It was like a fire, I guess, but I don't see any place for the coal.

We put our helmets together so we could talk.

SOUND: FIERCE WIND HOWLS THROUGHOUT THE SCENE ... PA AND BUD'S VOICES ARE SLIGHTLY MUFFLED BY THEIR HELMETS

PA: Catch your breath, son.

BUD: Pa, would it be possible--? I mean, for any of the frozen people to come to life? Like the ones down in the basement around the furnace when we go for water?

PA: No, they're dead. They were caught too quickly when it happened.

BUD: Oh. Pa, how do we know we're the only ones?

PA: We don't, but-- Well, there's a feeling you get, because it's always night. There used to be some of that feeling every night in the old days. But the sun chased it away every morning. You wouldn't know about that. You weren't born when the dark star pulled us away from the sun. You wouldn't know unless you'd seen the sun.

BUD: I've seen the sun. It's that big star at the end of the Big Dipper. I've seen it.

PA: It isn't the same. Come on. We're wasting time.

MUSIC: TRANSITION ... THEN BEHIND BUD--

BUD: (NARRATES) I don't know what the city looked like in the old days, but now it's beautiful. The starlight lets you see it pretty well. We're up on a hill and a plain slopes down away from us. Some taller buildings push up out of the feathery plain, topped by rounded caps of air crystals. Some of them are on a slant, because a lot of the buildings were badly twisted by the quakes and everything when the dark star pulled the Earth away from the sun. That's why Pa can't seal up the Nest airtight; the building's twisted too bad. Besides, we have to keep the chimney open.

We touched our helmets together so we could talk.

SOUND: FIERCE WIND HOWLS THROUGHOUT THE SCENE ... PA AND BUD'S VOICES ARE SLIGHTLY MUFFLED BY THEIR HELMETS

PA: Is that where you saw it, son?

BUD: It - it isn't there any more.

PA: Uh huh.

BUD: But it feels different. I mean, as if there's something out here -- waiting.

PA: Bud, if you see something like that again, don't tell the others.

BUD: Huh? Why not?

PA: Well, your Ma's sort of nervous these days and we owe her all the feeling of safety we can give her. Once -- it was when your sister was born -- I was ready to give up and die, but your mother kept me trying. Another time, she kept the fire going a whole week all by herself when I was sick.

BUD: She couldn't do that now, not the way she is.

PA: But you know that game we sometimes play? Tossing a ball around? Well, courage is like a ball. A person can only hold it so long and then he's got to toss it to someone else. When it's tossed your way, you've got to catch it and hold it tight -- and hope there'll be someone else to toss it to when you get tired of being brave.

BUD: Yeah. I guess so.

PA: Come on. We'll fill up the pails and get back.

BUD: But - what about whatever it is out here?

PA: We'll just have to wait and see. Come on; before the helmets frost over.

MUSIC: TRANSITION ... THEN BEHIND BUD--

BUD: (NARRATES) It's pretty hard to hide your feelings in the Nest. I mean, there's just room for the four of us. The blanket overhead just touches when Pa stands up straight. The floor's all covered with thick woolly rugs. Pa says it's inside a much bigger room, but I've never seen the real walls or ceiling.

Well, anyway, Pa laughed and kidded about what I'd seen. He said I had an imagination. But we could tell he took it serious. It was Sunday morning by the clocks that Pa kept all wound up on the shelf. So it was time for the story. We all sat around in a circle, the way we always do. Except I noticed that Pa casually took a hammer from the shelf and put it beside him.

I always like the story. Of course, Sis and I know it by heart by now. I mean, every Sunday since we were kids. But every once in a while, Pa surprises us by telling it a little different, or throwing in some extras. It starts out with a song. Ma used to sing it, but she forgets the words sometimes. And now Pa sings it mostly.

MUSIC: OUT

PA: (SINGS) O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,

Thy purple mountain majesties

Above the fruited plain!

America! America!

God shed His grace on thee,

And crown thy good with brotherhood

From sea to shining ...

BUD: (NARRATES, STARTING AFTER "FRUITED PLAIN" DURING ABOVE) Of course the words don't mean anything. I mean, the skies are spacious enough, but there aren't any waves of grain and the plain is all covered with a blanket of frozen air. But it's part of the story ceremony and Pa likes it. He says it reminds him of the old days. After the song, Pa starts the story.

PA: (HOLDS FINAL NOTE OF SONG) ... sea! (SPEAKS) In the days of my youth, the sun hung above, golden and warm. And the Earth was fruitful and multiplied. And the fields were green. And the day was glorious. And the wind blew across the hilltops. And air was free and good to breathe.

MUSIC: WARM ... FILLS A PAUSE ... THEN BEHIND BUD--

BUD: (NARRATES) That's the part of the story I like best; about how it was with the sun nice and warm. It's hard to believe all those people living without having to worry about cold -- and air. Never waking up sweating and screaming because you dreamed the fire went out. It's impossible to believe, but Pa was a good storyteller, and he made it seem real.

PA: (IN MID-STORY) And then the dark star came rushing out of space. In the beginning, they tried to keep the news from the people. But when the floods and the earthquakes started, the truth came out. At first, they thought the dark star would hit the sun. And then they were afraid it would strike the Earth itself. But it didn't. It only came close.

MUSIC: FOR A CATACLYSM ... THEN BEHIND BUD--

BUD: (NARRATES) Pa tells it like the sun and the dark star fought for the Earth like two dogs over a bone. I know what he means 'cause I've seen a picture of a dog in a magazine. And then the dark star won, and carried us off. But the sun kept the Moon. There were earthquakes and floods. Pa says that mountains fell and oceans slopped over. Oceans -- that's a lot of melted water lying around loose. It's hard to imagine, but Pa says it was so.

Then came the open question time in the story. Sis asked a question about what girls wore for clothes. And I asked Pa how people acted in those days when the Earth was twisted and jerked almost apart.

PA: Well, Bud, I was too busy to notice much. A friend of mine, Dr. Weisbrot, and Kelly the geophysicist and Walters the astronomer -- we knew what was going to happen. And we were working to fix up a place with airtight walls and insulation and big supplies of food and bottled air. But the place got smashed up in the earthquakes and -- they were all killed. So I put the Nest together at the last minute in the living room of our apartment. It's a four-room apartment.

BUD: You must have seen some of the people, like the frozen ones downstairs.

PA: At that time, Bud, I only thought of one thing -- your mother, and survival. If I had stopped to think, I wouldn't have even tried to make the Nest. Would have seemed ridiculous. Blankets and a coal fire against the cold and vacuum of space. But I didn't think. I survived.

MUSIC: FILLS A PAUSE ... THEN BEHIND BUD--

BUD: (NARRATES) I wasn't listening carefully as Pa went on about the building of the Nest. I kept thinking about something else -- about that light I'd seen outside. I kept asking myself, What if the frozen people were coming to life? What if they were like the liquid helium that crawls toward heat when it should be frozen solid? What if something were coming from the dark star to get us; something making the frozen people move, not by themselves? That would fit with what I'd seen -- a young lady's face and the moving light. I sat there and shivered, thinking of the frozen people, with minds from the dark star, creeping, crawling, snuffing their way, following the heat to the Nest. And then, over from beyond the blankets, I thought I heard a tiny noise.

PA: (IN MID-ANSWER) So I asked myself then, "What's the use of going on? Why prolong a doomed existence of hard work and cold and loneliness? The human race is done. The Earth is done. Why not give up?" I asked myself.

BUD: (NARRATES) And then -- I did hear the noise! Louder this time. A kind of shuffling tread coming closer.

PA: (CONTINUES) And then I got the answer. The Earth's always been a lonely place, millions of miles from the next planet, and no matter how long the human race might have lived, the end would have come some night. Those things don't matter. What matters is that life is good. It has a lovely texture, like some rich cloth or fur, or the petals of flowers. Crocuses. Daffodils. Or the fire's glow. And that's as true for the last man as the first.

BUD: (NARRATES) Still those steps kept shuffling closer. Pa was talking and Ma was dreaming with her eyes closed. And Sis was looking at herself sideways in the mirror. And I was the only one who heard the noise. A noise -- outside.

PA: (CONTINUES) So right then and there I told myself that I was going on as if we had all eternity ahead of us. I'd have children. And I'd teach them all I could. I'd get them to read books. Try to enlarge and seal the Nest. I'd try to keep everything beautiful and alive. I'd keep alive my feeling of wonder -- even at the cold and the dark, and the distant stars.

BUD: (BEAT) Pa?

PA: (LOW) Sh!

BUD: Pa, I hear--

PA: (WHISPERS) I know.

MA: (ALARMED) What is it, Alfred? (NO ANSWER) What is it? What's going on? You've got to tell me.

SIS: (TENSE) Pa? I'm scared.

PA: (LOW) Quiet. Bud? You heard it?

BUD: Uh huh. A kind of shuffling, coming toward the Nest.

MA: (WHIMPERS IN DISMAY)

PA: Sis, take care of your mother.

MA: It's all right, Ma. Lie down. Come on.

PA: (TO BUD) I'll take the hammer. You take the hatchet.

BUD: What is it, Pa? What is it?

PA: I don't know. Listen.

BUD: (PAUSE) It's closer.

MA: (LOW, TERRIFIED MOAN)

SIS: Ma, sh!

BUD: (BEAT, WHISPERS) Pa! The blanket is moving.

PA: (WHISPERS) Ready with your ax.

MAN: (OFF, VOICE MUFFLED BY HELMET) Hello?!

MA: (STARTLED SHRIEK)

MAN: (OFF) Who's there?! Is there somebody in there?!

PA: (BEAT, THEN CHOKED WITH DISBELIEF) Come in! It's all right.

MAN: (ENTERS, AMAZED, TO WOMAN) They're alive. Alive!

WOMAN: (VOICE MUFFLED BY HELMET, TO PA) Who are you?

PA: (HALTINGLY; FOR A MOMENT, HE CAN'T REMEMBER HIS LAST NAME) Alfred--
(BEAT) Alfred-- (BEAT) Hutchinson. Dr. Alfred Hutchinson! You can take off your helmets in here!

MAN: (CONFUSED) But the air?

PA: (GIDDY) We have air!

BUD: (EXCITED) We bring it in in pails!

WOMAN: (TRYING TO BE POLITE) Come on, Ralph. Let's take off our helmets.

SOUND: HELMETS UNFASTENED AND REMOVED ... THEIR VOICES ARE NO LONGER MUFFLED

MAN: It's - it's impossible.

PA: (STAMMERS) Where are you from? We thought we were the only ones.

MAN: Los Alamos.

PA: The nuclear laboratory?

WOMAN: Well, yes, that's right. We get our power from the reactor, using the stockpile of bombs for fuel.

PA: (REALIZES) Then - there are others. There are. There are other men.
(CHOKES UP) There - are - other - men.

BUD: Pa? Pa, is all right? Should I put the ax down?

PA: (QUICKLY) Yes, yes, it's all right; you can put it down.

SIS: You mean you come from another nest?

MAN: It's a little bigger than this. We've got a small airtight city with airlocks.

WOMAN: We generate our electricity; food from hydroponics.

PA: I can't believe it. I can't.

MAN: I can't believe this. It's impossible. You can't maintain an air supply without hermetic sealing. It's impossible!

BUD: Oh, no, no, it's simple -- as long as you keep the fire going to melt the air and enough air boiling to keep the fire burning.

PA: How did you come here? Why?

MAN: Well, we keep scouting around for survivors. There are a number of colonies -- Brookhaven, Oak Ridge; and Harwell in England and the Argonne laboratory in France. We didn't expect to find anything in this city, though. But our detectors picked up a heat trace so we tracked it down.

MA: (WITH DIGNITY) Alfred? You're forgetting your manners. We have company.

PA: Of course, of course! Sis? Throw a handful of coal on the fire.

SIS: (SURPRISED) Pa! A whole handful?

PA: Doesn't matter now. And, Bud, bring out another pail of air.

MAN: Why, it's incredible.

PA: And you have laboratories and transports?

WOMAN: We only have a two-seater scout, but if we rip out the bulkhead to the storage compartment, we can make it all right.

MAN: We can have you back at Los Alamos in four hours.

MA: (DISMAYED GASP)

WOMAN: (BEAT) What's the matter?

PA: (SLOW, AWKWARD) I guess we really hadn't thought about it that way.

MA: (APPREHENSIVE) But I - I wouldn't know how to act there. And besides I haven't any - clothes.

PA: (SOBER) Just doesn't seem right to let this fire go out. It's been eighteen years. Burning every minute.

MAN: But you can't stay here.

WOMAN: Ralph--

MAN: But, after all--

WOMAN: Ralph!

MAN: (REALIZES) Oh. Uh, look, Dr. Hutchinson. We'll go out to the ship, and bring back a small power heater. I know this is very sudden and upsetting to you. You need a chance to - adjust.

SOUND: HELMETS SECURED

MAN: (THROUGH HELMET) We'll be back in a few minutes. (MOVING OFF, TO WOMAN) It's incredible. In buckets. Air in buckets.

PA: (BEAT, TAKING IT ALL IN) Well.

BUD: They didn't think the Nest smelled so good; I could tell.

MA: (QUIETLY IMPRESSED) She - she had a wave in her hair. Did you see that? And - and lipstick.

PA: (BEAT, AT A LOSS) I suppose we have to decide what to do.

SIS: (STUMBLES OVER "LOS ALAMOS") Pa? At Los - Los Alamos and those other places, there'll be lots of people, won't there?

PA: Yes.

SIS: I mean, not just your father or a brother.

PA: That's right.

SIS: Boys?

PA: I suppose so. But somehow I feel a little -- empty.

MA: (SHE'S COME BACK TO REALITY, SENSES HIS UNEASINESS) Alfred? Alfred, it's different now that we know others are alive. You don't have to feel the responsibility for keeping the human race going.

BUD: (GENTLY) Pa, I'd like to see those rockets and laboratories. Wouldn't you, Pa?

PA: I - suppose so.

BUD: It won't be easy leaving the Nest. I mean, it's just right and there's only four of us. It's kind of a scary idea. Big place with a lot of strangers.

PA: (CONVINCED) You'll get over that feeling, son. The trouble with the world was that it kept getting smaller and smaller till it ended with just the Nest. Now it'll be good to have a real huge world again. The way it was in the beginning.

MUSIC: HOPEFUL TRANSITION ... THEN BEHIND BUD--

BUD: (NARRATES) And so we're gonna leave the Nest in the morning -- by Pa's clocks. We've got the power heater going now. Seems funny to be this warm when it isn't Christmas or somebody's birthday. But still it's hard for me to realize that this is the last time I'll go out of the Nest -- through all the blankets -- to get a pail of air.

MUSIC: UP, FOR A CURTAIN

ANNOUNCER: You have just heard "X Minus One," presented by the National Broadcasting Company in cooperation with Galaxy Science Fiction Magazine which this month features the Edward M. Ludwig story, "A Coffin for Jacob." With never a moment to rest, the pursuit through space felt like a game of hounds and hares. Or was it "Follow the Leader"? Galaxy Magazine, on your newsstand today.

MUSIC: SNEAKS IN UNDER FOLLOWING--

ANNOUNCER: Tonight, by transcription, "X Minus One" has brought you "A Pail of Air," a story from the pages of Galaxy written by Fritz Leiber and adapted for radio by George Lefferts. Featured in the cast were Ronny Liss, Pamela Fitzmaurice, Richard Hamilton, Eleanor Phelps, Rita Lloyd, and Joe DeSantis. Your announcer, Fred Collins. "X Minus One" was directed by Daniel Sutter and is an NBC radio network production.

MUSIC: TO A FINISH ...