

Destination Moon, 1969 to Today

Voice-over:

July 20th, 1969, and a new page in the history books is being written. Apollo 11's lunar module, Eagle, was heading for the surface of the moon.

Apollo 11:

Contact light? OK, engine stopped.

Houston:

We copy you're down, Eagle.

Manuel Grande:

Well, it was the middle of the night. I-and I was, er, sitting with my parents, and we had a tiny little black-and-white television screen.

Apollo 11:

It's very pretty out here. Are you getting a TV picture now, Houston?

Christian Erd:

I was, as a six-year-old kid, glued to the televi-television station, watching the reports from the lunar landing.

Apollo 11:

OK, you got it, that's a good step. Beautiful view. [indistinct chatter]

Manuel Grande:

We couldn't see anything at all 'cause the pictures were terrible and we were sitting there going: Is that his foot? No, that's the moon! No, that's the spacecraft! We couldn't see anything but we knew it was important.

Apollo 11:

I hope you're watching, er, how hard I have to hit this into the ground, er, to the tune of about five inches, Houston.

Christian Erd:

We had a black-and-white television set in our living-room and it was a big excitement seeing this achievement.

Neil Armstrong:

It's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.

Voice-over:

At Aberystwyth University in the west of Wales, there's a research department dedicated to the solar system. They can test robots here to judge their suitability for the exploration of the moon or Mars. And there's always discussion about how the Earth's only natural satellite came to be.

Manuel Grande:

What they brought back gave us a theory which was that the Earth and the moon formed with a giant impact. It made an awful lot of mess. For a while, the Earth would have had rings like Saturn. That ring recondensed to form the moon we know now. And they made that theory in order to explain why the material they brought back looked like Earth material. Over the next forty years, we've looked at that material more and more closely and realised that in fact, it isn't the same material as the Earth. It must have come from the other impact with a Mars-like object. People sometimes call it Theia. And so that theory has completely been turned on its head since it was first formed. But it's still the best theory there is.

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