the harrowing scenes from the movie gravity the oscar-nominated Hollywood thriller that brought the attention to the dangers for astronauts when they step outside the International Space Station. Hello everyone, I'm Michelle Franzen in New York that danger was all too real for American astronauts Rick Mastracchio and Mike Hopkins when they had to make the dangerous trip to repair the cooling system on the ISS back in December but that mission was a success and they are both joining us now for a unique look into life in space guys.
thank you for joining us I just wanted to get this out of the way right into the bat from what you've seen in the movie gravity is that's something that could actually happen a robotic arm breaking off leaving you untethered out in space well of course things can happen in space things go wrong there's always risk there is danger that's definitely true but you know it was a movie they over dramatize things they the the actors over react to situations we train for a lot of off-nominal situations and if something
goes wrong we stay very calm and we run procedures and we work with the ground
to you know to recover whatever goes wrong so the movie gravity was a very exciting movie it was great to watch but it is obviously not very realistic and Rick you're a spacewalk veteran but you had some trouble with your suit during one of the EVs is that a drip adrenaline pumping every single time well whenever you're out doing a spacewalk you definitely have heightened alertness and heightened awareness of where you are and what you're doing so but you
also remain very calm because like I said we trained this many times I've done many spacewalks now I've trained many many times in Houston in the large swimming pool so if something goes wrong we have procedures we work on with the ground like I said before and but every once in a while something does get your attention if you get an alarm on your suit or something goes wrong it definitely gets your heart pumping a little bit and Mike want to ask you a question - do you ever get a chance to sort of take in the moment when you're out there are you
just too busy and too nervous no

actually there were several times when

we had we had time to just look around

and see the earth going by and it was

actually amazing truly incredible

because for the first time you get to see the earth passing by without any obstructions without having to look out

a window with the frame around it and

all of that so we were certainly very busy but there are times when you need to just slow down and pause and maybe

there's you're waiting on a step that

the ground needs to take with the system
or something of that nature so we had a few moments to look around very good now there's been an interesting video that's been making the rounds from one of your colleagues Cady Coleman showing us how the toilet works all that stuff you know that everyone has questions about in space using MMS it doesn't look too comfortable but it does represent what you guys have to go through well yeah so the systems up here like the like the toilet and all of that it's certainly a little bit different than than what we use down on earth but it does work
pretty well but it also takes a lot of maintenance to keep it going so you know that's one of those things that if anything does go wrong with it it takes priority on getting fixed now of course you've been out there doing all sorts of repairs but there's also experiments you are doing up there for students on earth one of them involves an ant farm what happens if those ants kind of escape that area well the answer obviously encased in a in a container and unable to escape but uh you know if they got out I guess it would be our job to catch
them and and Corral them back up but

00:04:10,829 --> 00:04:18,389
luckily none of them escaped

00:04:13,889 --> 00:04:20,039
I know all those things you have to

00:04:18,389 --> 00:04:21,839
think about and all those questions we

00:04:20,040 --> 00:04:24,660
have here some of them seem very silly

00:04:21,839 --> 00:04:27,179
but I know that your space there is very

00:04:24,660 --> 00:04:34,560
limited so how are you dealing with the

00:04:27,180 --> 00:04:36,418
garbage issue at the ISS yeah actually

00:04:34,560 --> 00:04:38,459
that's a that's a fantastic question and

00:04:36,418 --> 00:04:40,740
very relevant to what just happened so

00:04:38,459 --> 00:04:44,039
yesterday we actually released the

00:04:40,740 --> 00:04:46,620
Cygnus orbital one vehicle and that

00:04:44,040 --> 00:04:48,180
vehicle about a month ago brought up a

00:04:46,620 --> 00:04:50,519
bunch of supplies it bought up food

00:04:48,180 --> 00:04:53,519
clothes experiments brought up the ants
but when it left yesterday it took away all of our trash and so it's a great day here on station because it's nice and clean there's hardly any trash around it smells really good then and actually I think as we're speaking right now orbital is orbital one is probably getting close to going into the atmosphere you know Mike let's stay with you it looks like you've been trying to bring some new life to the ISS but it hasn't seemed to work out some of those experiments with the plants yeah that's
right I was able to bring a few seeds up

with me some pumpkin seeds some sunflower seeds and it's pretty amazing

how easy it is to get them started to get them to germinate and and but then

after that unless you've got the right kind of light unless you've got the right kind of food it's not very easy to keep them going and so that's that's been pretty tough I can like a make them last for about about three weeks two to six weeks or so but but then after that they just they'd wilt away and then die on me pushing those hydroponics so it
can either of you describe an average day on board the ISS of course we don't normally have a chance to go up there and see that so give us an idea of what you guys go through on a daily basis okay well we wake up fairly early we get about an hour to breakfast and get ready for work first thing in the morning after that is we have a meeting with the ground folks and they kind of give us our schedule for the day and that schedule include three basic things a lot of exercise about two and a half hours of exercise
a certain amount of maintenance of the
00:06:29,249 --> 00:06:32,699
space station if we have to do some

00:06:31,019 --> 00:06:34,408
maintenance on the on the toilet or any

00:06:32,699 --> 00:06:36,509
other systems and but the biggest part

00:06:34,408 --> 00:06:38,098
of it will be science today I was

00:06:36,509 --> 00:06:40,468
working in this glove box right here

00:06:38,098 --> 00:06:42,959
burning small samples to see how a fire

00:06:40,468 --> 00:06:46,769
and flames react in space or behave in

00:06:42,959 --> 00:06:48,809
space so it's most of our day or is is

00:06:46,769 --> 00:06:50,639
set with experiments and science but

00:06:48,809 --> 00:06:52,139
then of course we have maintenance and

00:06:50,639 --> 00:06:58,679
we have a lot of exercise so that we can

00:06:52,139 --> 00:07:00,149
walk when we get back to earth and back

00:06:58,678 --> 00:07:01,888
to Mike you're about ready to come down

00:07:00,149 --> 00:07:03,658
in March and your schedule could
actually be moved up a little bit because of too much snow what's going on with that yeah actually we were scheduled to return on the 12th of March but a massive right now that's been moved to the 11th of March and basically because of where we're gonna land so we were originally going to land in the northern part of Kazakhstan which still has a lot of snow there and so for the search-and-rescue folks and for all of those to be able to get us out of the vehicle safely once we touch down we've moved to a southern landing zone and
just due to the orbital mechanics and

all of that that means we're going to

we're going to depart the station a day

earlier and land a day earlier well you

know something like I don't know a

billion people are watching the Oscars

on earth are we also going to have two

viewers from space rooting for gravity

perhaps for the Oscar I don't think

we're going to be watching it live but

we'll probably ask

Houston maybe to uplink it for us or at

least give us the results of all the

movies that won the awards but it'll be
interesting to see how gravity does

fantastic well astronauts Rick

Mastracchio and Mike Hopkins thank you

so much for joining us and giving us a

unique look and a link to the

International Space Station you of

course can get a complete recap right

here on ABC news calm for now I'm

Michelle Franzen in New York with this

ABC News digital station this is Houston

ACR that concludes the event thank you