



1
00:00:00,266 --> 00:00:04,470
[silent]

2
00:00:04,503 --> 00:00:09,776
The morning of November 8, 1957,
at Huntsville, Alabama.

3
00:00:09,809 --> 00:00:13,846
A sudden meeting has been called
by General John B. Medaris,

4
00:00:13,879 --> 00:00:17,650
commanding general of the Army's
Ballistic Missile Agency.

5
00:00:17,683 --> 00:00:21,320
I have a very important
announcement for you.

6
00:00:21,353 --> 00:00:23,656
We've been assigned the
mission of launching

7
00:00:23,689 --> 00:00:26,559
a scientific Earth satellite.

8
00:00:26,592 --> 00:00:30,363
And we will use the Jupiter-C
configuration as a carrier

9
00:00:30,396 --> 00:00:33,166
that we developed along with the
Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

10
00:00:33,199 --> 00:00:36,335
I promised the Secretary of the
Army that we would be ready

11
00:00:36,368 --> 00:00:38,504

in 90 days or less.

12

00:00:38,537 --> 00:00:39,806

Let's go, Wehrner!

13

00:00:39,839 --> 00:00:41,507

Meanwhile, far across the
country

14

00:00:41,540 --> 00:00:43,676

at the Jet Propulsion
Laboratory,

15

00:00:43,709 --> 00:00:46,746

a sprawling 80-acre research
and development complex

16

00:00:46,779 --> 00:00:48,514

in Pasadena, California,

17

00:00:48,547 --> 00:00:52,018

scientists and engineers were
racing toward the same deadline.

18

00:00:52,051 --> 00:00:55,188

Ninety days to put a
satellite into orbit.

19

00:00:55,221 --> 00:00:59,025

Their job: furnish the
high-speed upper stages

20

00:00:59,058 --> 00:01:01,694

to take over after the first
stage powered the satellite

21

00:01:01,727 --> 00:01:04,030

to the prescribed
distance from the Earth.

22

00:01:07,066 --> 00:01:08,768

The beams of powerful
searchlights

23

00:01:08,801 --> 00:01:10,203

light up the missile.

24

00:01:10,236 --> 00:01:12,305

The drama approaches
the final act,

25

00:01:12,338 --> 00:01:15,408

the Army's first attempt to
fire a manmade moon

26

00:01:15,441 --> 00:01:16,843

into orbit.

27

00:01:16,876 --> 00:01:21,114

Late evening, Friday,
January 31, 1958,

28

00:01:21,147 --> 00:01:23,149

in a blockhouse at Canaveral,

29

00:01:23,182 --> 00:01:25,118

the countdown to Explorer 1.

30

00:01:25,151 --> 00:01:35,261

10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1

31

00:01:35,294 --> 00:01:37,430

Fire command Fire command.

32

00:01:37,463 --> 00:01:39,065

[unintelligible]

33

00:01:39,098 --> 00:01:51,377

[roar of rocket]

34

00:01:51,410 --> 00:01:58,718

[Teletype sound]

35

00:02:00,953 --> 00:02:02,155

The missile is in flight.

36

00:02:02,188 --> 00:02:04,257

But it will take
another hour and a half

37

00:02:04,290 --> 00:02:07,326

to know whether the
satellite is in orbit.

38

00:02:07,359 --> 00:02:12,098

About midnight General Medaris
finally called his assistant,

39

00:02:12,131 --> 00:02:13,866

Colonel Leonard Orman.

40

00:02:13,899 --> 00:02:16,135

Hello, Len.

41

00:02:16,168 --> 00:02:19,038

You can send this off
to the Secretary:

42

00:02:19,071 --> 00:02:21,607

that our satellite is
definitely on orbit!

43

00:02:21,640 --> 00:02:23,109

Twenty minutes later,

44

00:02:23,142 --> 00:02:25,778

Dr. Porter opened the

question-and-answer session

45

00:02:25,811 --> 00:02:27,613

by introducing three
of the key men

46

00:02:27,646 --> 00:02:30,917

in the success story
of Explorer 1.

47

00:02:30,950 --> 00:02:33,119

Well, the question is:

48

00:02:33,152 --> 00:02:35,855

has any form of life been
placed in the satellite?

49

00:02:35,888 --> 00:02:38,124

I think I could answer
that one almost myself.

50

00:02:38,157 --> 00:02:40,026

Not intentionally.

[Laughter]

51

00:02:40,059 --> 00:02:43,529

May... maybe we have a
Florida cockroach inside.

52

00:02:43,562 --> 00:02:45,965

We don't know.

[Laughter]

53

00:02:45,998 --> 00:02:47,133

"Just one more!"

54

00:02:47,166 --> 00:02:50,136

came the inevitable plea
from the photographers.

55

00:02:50,169 --> 00:02:54,106

And, exhausted as they
were, the trio obliged■

56

00:02:54,139 --> 00:02:55,608

with what was to be

57

00:02:55,641 --> 00:02:59,912

the page one spread in
newspapers all over the world.

58

00:02:59,945 --> 00:03:01,914

The United States was
in the space business

59

00:03:01,947 --> 00:03:03,149

along with the Russians,