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1  
00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:23,730

\h Music.

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00:00:23,730 --> 00:00:28,730

\h It's a challenge, because it's one of those things, it's hard to explain if you haven't been there.

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00:00:28,730 --> 00:00:36,660

\h But the main things are the view. I mean, the view of the Earth from space is just astounding and amazing.

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00:00:36,660 --> 00:00:42,000

\h It's more beautiful than the highest mountaintop you have ever seen. But you're also,

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00:00:42,000 --> 00:00:46,350

\h you're up in the space environment where everything above you is blackness.

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00:00:46,350 --> 00:00:58,000

\h And you can see the Earth below you and the atmosphere, and it looks so beautiful and green and blue.

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00:00:58,000 --> 00:01:04,360

\h Well, I think the moment that stood out for me was my first real look at the Earth on my first mission.

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00:01:04,360 --> 00:01:10,680

\h You launch and you're very busy for 8 to 10 minutes as the engines are going and getting you safely into orbit.

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00:01:10,680 --> 00:01:14,280

\h And then you're still quite busy for the next whole orbit,

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00:01:14,280 --> 00:01:20,460

\h basically, as you get the orbiter changed around from being a rocket on launch to being an orbital vehicle.

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00:01:20,460 --> 00:01:24,140

\h We're busy in the front, we've got our suits on, it's kind of uncomfortable.

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00:01:24,140 --> 00:01:28,790

\h And then there was a moment about an hour into the flight where I happened to look out to my right,

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00:01:28,790 --> 00:01:32,590

\h out my right window, and I looked down, we were over the Pacific, and there was

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00:01:32,590 --> 00:01:37,170

\h Hawaii right below us and it looked just huge. We were only about 90 miles up at that point,

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00:01:37,170 --> 00:01:41,690

\h which seems like a long way up, but the Earth looks pretty big from there.

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00:01:41,690 --> 00:01:44,630

\h And I just saw the beautiful Hawaiian Islands passing underneath as we

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00:01:44,630 --> 00:01:47,830

\h went over at five miles a second. And that was a really amazing sight.

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00:01:47,830 --> 00:01:56,300

\h That really burned into my memory from my first mission.

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00:01:56,300 --> 00:02:01,870

\h It varies very much from one person to the next. For me, it was about a day. You know,

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00:02:01,870 --> 00:02:05,050

\h you spend your whole life down here at 1 G and then you're

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00:02:05,050 --> 00:02:08,510

\h thrown into this zero-G microgravity where you're just floating and everything's floating.

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00:02:08,510 --> 00:02:11,780

\h It takes awhile for your body to get used to that. But after about a day,

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00:02:11,780 --> 00:02:16,720

\h you're kind of back to normal and you can do your work for the rest of the mission.

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00:02:16,720 --> 00:02:18,640

\h And it's the same in reverse when you come home.

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00:02:18,640 --> 00:02:24,200

\h You've spent almost two weeks up in zero G and you come back on entry and into land,

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00:02:24,200 --> 00:02:30,350

\h and it takes your body a couple days to kind of get used to being back down here in this 1 G environment

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00:02:30,350 --> 00:02:38,420

\h After that, you're back to normal.

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00:02:38,420 --> 00:02:41,700

\h It's a very different experience. I mean, the shuttle's coming in as a glider,

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00:02:41,700 --> 00:02:45,190

\h so we're very interested after we do our deorbit burn on the other side of the

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00:02:45,190 --> 00:02:50,230

\h world, basically, of tracking our progress very carefully across the Pacific and then across

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00:02:50,230 --> 00:02:53,250

\h Mexico and the Caribbean as we come into the Kennedy Space Center.

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00:02:53,250 --> 00:02:57,850

\h And then once you get close to the Kennedy Space Center, coming in on that steep dive, lining up with

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00:02:57,850 --> 00:03:03,780

\h runway and getting it touched down much faster than an airliner or even a tactical jet would touch down.

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00:03:03,780 --> 00:03:07,570

\h We spend a lot of time practicing, a lot of practice approaches, all have well over

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00:03:07,570 --> 00:03:20,130

\h 1,000 by the time we get to do it for real. So it's an interesting task, but we get a lot of practice for it.

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00:03:20,130 --> 00:03:23,590

\h Probably all of the folks that are currently astronauts, you know,

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00:03:23,590 --> 00:03:26,230

\h we didn't think we were going to be astronauts when we grew up.

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00:03:26,230 --> 00:03:29,490

\h We just decided to do something that we really loved and were really interested in.

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00:03:29,490 --> 00:03:32,340

\h And we went down a path that eventually we found out, hey,

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00:03:32,340 --> 00:03:37,760

\h I can go fly to NASA with this resume. So we did, and then we were very lucky to be picked.

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00:03:37,760 --> 00:03:42,620

\h So if someone's interested in spaceflight, and I hope most people are because it's an amazing experien

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00:03:42,620 --> 00:03:45,510

\h the best way to get there is to do what you're really interested in.

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00:03:45,510 --> 00:03:48,930

\h Do what you love and that'll give you the motivation to really do

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00:03:48,930 --> 00:03:52,450

\h well and to excel, and that's really what NASA's looking for.