



Charles Bolden
Astronaut, NASA Administrator

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00:00:00,490 --> 00:00:20,890
Music

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00:00:20,890 --> 00:00:24,050
Charlie Bolden, Astronaut, NASA Administrator: Mine is an interesting story. Ron McNair, the late, great

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00:00:24,050 --> 00:00:29,300
Dr. Ron McNair who became a friend of mine many years ago and unfortunately was killed on the

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00:00:29,300 --> 00:00:35,000
Challenger accident, was my inspiration for becoming an astronaut. I never dreamed of being one until I

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00:00:35,000 --> 00:00:39,560
met him while I was a test pilot and he challenged me to apply for the shuttle program and that's how I

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00:00:39,560 --> 00:00:45,990
applied and that's how I happened to be here.

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00:00:45,990 --> 00:00:51,790
Bolden: I think if anything, flying in space changed my perspective on our planet.

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I was always one that had been raised in a family that was relatively religious and studious, if you will,

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but just having the opportunity to view the planet from the perspective of space really changed the way

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00:01:06,050 --> 00:01:12,040
I looked at the planet on which we live.

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00:01:12,040 --> 00:01:17,280
Bolden: You always remember your last flight and you always remember your first flight.

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00:01:17,280 --> 00:01:24,050
I would have to go back to main engine cutoff on my very first flight on STS-61C aboard Columbia.

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00:01:24,050 --> 00:01:29,840

When we, back then you didn't roll upright, you were still upside down when you got to orbit and I

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00:01:29,840 --> 00:01:34,480

remember raising my seat, looking out and seeing the British Isles go by and then this huge island that

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00:01:34,480 --> 00:01:40,250

turned out to be the continent of Africa. I had done a lot of study on the geography of Africa to try to

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00:01:40,250 --> 00:01:46,620

prepare myself because I knew my folks had come from that continent, from some countries down

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00:01:46,620 --> 00:01:53,200

there. So I knew where all the countries were and I looked out and it was just huge Sahara desert and

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00:01:53,200 --> 00:01:55,900

then the midland part, the equatorial region of Africa.

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00:01:55,900 --> 00:02:01,700

No lines down there at all, no countries, no anything. I was just wiped out. I was just overcome with

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00:02:01,700 --> 00:02:08,900

emotion, one looking at Africa, you know, my home country or my home continent if you will, just

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00:02:08,900 --> 00:02:15,380

overcome with emotion. I just remember tears coming down my face.

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00:02:15,380 --> 00:02:20,500

Bolden: I think among the lessons that I try to employ are those that have to do with people.

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I talk to people quite a bit about one of my most memorable experiences in my time in the astronaut

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office being the two year period of time in which I was involved in training for my last flight, STS-60,

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when I actually had an opportunity to meet and serve with Sergei Krikalev and Vladimir Titov, two

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Russian cosmonauts, former Soviet cosmonauts who came to the United States with their families and

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00:02:44,410 --> 00:02:50,200

lived in Houston with us for a little bit more than two years and it was during that period of time that we

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got to know each other and our families got to know each other very, very well. What I always knew, an