



WATCH THIS
SPACE
with Jim Bridenstine
NASA Administrator

1
00:00:05,089 --> 00:00:07,769
Welcome to Watch This Space. I'm NASA

2
00:00:07,770 --> 00:00:10,109
Administrator Jim Bridenstine and today

3
00:00:10,110 --> 00:00:12,558
we have a very, very special guest

4
00:00:12,559 --> 00:00:15,679
Astronaut Nick Hague, who was our

5
00:00:15,680 --> 00:00:18,358
American hero who flew on the Russian

6
00:00:18,359 --> 00:00:21,629
Soyuz rocket that was, in fact, a mission

7
00:00:21,630 --> 00:00:25,198
failure but really, it was a success. He

8
00:00:25,199 --> 00:00:27,358
followed all the procedures, he did it in

9
00:00:27,359 --> 00:00:29,999
Russian, and he came home alive. The NASA

10
00:00:30,000 --> 00:00:32,519
family is exceptionally proud of his

11
00:00:32,520 --> 00:00:34,319
service and today we have the

12
00:00:34,320 --> 00:00:36,889
opportunity to speak to him directly.

13
00:00:36,890 --> 00:00:39,749

Well, Nick thank you for joining us, if

14

00:00:39,750 --> 00:00:41,909

you would just share with us how you're

15

00:00:41,910 --> 00:00:42,859

feeling.

16

00:00:42,860 --> 00:00:46,288

Yes, sir, great to be with you. I'm feeling

17

00:00:46,289 --> 00:00:49,229

great, all things considered, being able

18

00:00:49,230 --> 00:00:50,609

to walk away from something like that

19

00:00:50,610 --> 00:00:52,409

with the only a couple, you know, bruises

20

00:00:52,410 --> 00:00:56,218

or bumps. You know, physically, I'm doing

21

00:00:56,219 --> 00:00:58,589

awesome. I was actually able to enjoy

22

00:00:58,590 --> 00:01:00,538

some of the cool fall weather here in

23

00:01:00,539 --> 00:01:02,759

Houston and go out for a run with my

24

00:01:02,760 --> 00:01:05,609

wife this morning.

25

00:01:05,610 --> 00:01:07,769

Yeah, feeling great. That's wonderful to

26
00:01:07,770 --> 00:01:08,039
hear.

27
00:01:08,040 --> 00:01:10,978
Share with us, if you would just walk

28
00:01:10,979 --> 00:01:13,639
through kind of what you experienced

29
00:01:13,640 --> 00:01:16,408
from launch all the way until

30
00:01:16,409 --> 00:01:20,399
touchdown. Yeah absolutely, sir, you know,

31
00:01:20,400 --> 00:01:21,719
so, the the first two minutes of the

32
00:01:21,720 --> 00:01:25,769
launch went completely per plan and it

33
00:01:25,770 --> 00:01:27,629
was a smooth ride. And you know, during

34
00:01:27,630 --> 00:01:29,368
those first two minutes as we're sitting

35
00:01:29,369 --> 00:01:30,929
there watching everything, monitoring

36
00:01:30,930 --> 00:01:32,999
everything, in the back of my mind I'm

37
00:01:33,000 --> 00:01:35,069
thinking, wow, this is everything

38
00:01:35,070 --> 00:01:38,099

I expected it to be. And it was up until

39

00:01:38,100 --> 00:01:40,019

it became everything I didn't expect it

40

00:01:40,020 --> 00:01:42,629

to be. You know, at that first stage

41

00:01:42,630 --> 00:01:45,419

separation, all of a sudden, we were kind

42

00:01:45,420 --> 00:01:47,459

of violently shaken side-to-side and

43

00:01:47,460 --> 00:01:49,258

thrust back into our seats as the launch

44

00:01:49,259 --> 00:01:51,868

escape system ripped us away from the

45

00:01:51,869 --> 00:01:54,868

rocket and, you know, as all of that's

46

00:01:54,869 --> 00:01:57,179

happening, you can imagine being shaken

47

00:01:57,180 --> 00:01:59,099

around, your vision's a little blurry.

48

00:01:59,100 --> 00:02:01,468

I hear the alarm and I see the the red

49

00:02:01,469 --> 00:02:03,449

light where the, you know, the engine has

50

00:02:03,450 --> 00:02:06,629

had an emergency and so at that point, it

51
00:02:06,630 --> 00:02:10,818
was a pretty vivid realization of

52
00:02:10,819 --> 00:02:12,318
that, hey, we're not gonna make it to

53
00:02:12,319 --> 00:02:14,029
orbit today. We've been pulled off the

54
00:02:14,030 --> 00:02:16,339
rocket and and now we've got to land so,

55
00:02:16,340 --> 00:02:20,479
yeah. Yeah, did you know that you had

56
00:02:20,480 --> 00:02:22,488
separated from the rocket or did you

57
00:02:22,489 --> 00:02:24,619
just know that the rocket was having

58
00:02:24,620 --> 00:02:28,789
problems? Yeah, I knew we were away

59
00:02:28,790 --> 00:02:31,399
from the rocket at that point and,

60
00:02:31,400 --> 00:02:33,199
you know, it's pretty clear and the way

61
00:02:33,200 --> 00:02:35,179
the procedures are laid out, you know

62
00:02:35,180 --> 00:02:37,968
what the next step is and so Alexei

63
00:02:37,969 --> 00:02:41,869

and I just kind of both transitioned

64

00:02:41,870 --> 00:02:44,238

into, okay, we know we're coming

65

00:02:44,239 --> 00:02:46,188

back and we need to start executing

66

00:02:46,189 --> 00:02:48,979

these procedures. So, there's a little bit

67

00:02:48,980 --> 00:02:50,839

of a time after the launch escape system

68

00:02:50,840 --> 00:02:53,509

has pulled you away, because based on

69

00:02:53,510 --> 00:02:56,388

that point in our trajectory what pulled

70

00:02:56,389 --> 00:02:59,119

us away was actually the fairing that we

71

00:02:59,120 --> 00:03:01,188

were underneath and the rockets attached

72

00:03:01,189 --> 00:03:03,378

to it. So it pulled us away underneath

73

00:03:03,379 --> 00:03:04,789

that fairing so we couldn't see outside

74

00:03:04,790 --> 00:03:08,929

yet and it took about 30 seconds for us

75

00:03:08,930 --> 00:03:11,179

to then separate the capsule from that

76
00:03:11,180 --> 00:03:12,918
fairing and then we could see out the

77
00:03:12,919 --> 00:03:16,488
windows. So, those 30 seconds

78
00:03:16,489 --> 00:03:18,289
were probably the longest 30 seconds of

79
00:03:18,290 --> 00:03:21,348
the entire process, as you just try to

80
00:03:21,349 --> 00:03:23,089
process, you know, what has transpired,

81
00:03:23,090 --> 00:03:26,149
where are we at, trying to assess, you

82
00:03:26,150 --> 00:03:28,039
know, your condition, and the state of the

83
00:03:28,040 --> 00:03:30,198
capsule and then prepare for what you

84
00:03:30,199 --> 00:03:32,658
need to do over the next next 15 minutes

85
00:03:32,659 --> 00:03:34,608
to get back down on the ground. So

86
00:03:34,609 --> 00:03:36,499
I was watching a lot of the data and

87
00:03:36,500 --> 00:03:38,149
listening to the communications with

88
00:03:38,150 --> 00:03:40,698

Dmitry Rogozin, the head of Roscosmos,

89

00:03:40,699 --> 00:03:43,458
the Russian space agency, while this was

90

00:03:43,459 --> 00:03:46,098
going on and I remember hearing at a

91

00:03:46,099 --> 00:03:48,589
point in time that you had a feeling of

92

00:03:48,590 --> 00:03:50,749
weightlessness. Was that pretty much

93

00:03:50,750 --> 00:03:55,158
soon after the the launch abort system

94

00:03:55,159 --> 00:04:00,318
was activated? Yeah, so as it rips us away

95

00:04:00,319 --> 00:04:02,059
from the rocket at that point, once those

96

00:04:02,060 --> 00:04:05,119
thrusters are done, we're like, you know,

97

00:04:05,120 --> 00:04:06,708
if you throw a baseball up in the air,

98

00:04:06,709 --> 00:04:08,478
it's gonna follow this ballistic

99

00:04:08,479 --> 00:04:10,818
trajectory and so that feeling of

100

00:04:10,819 --> 00:04:12,708
weightlessness is kind of when we were

101
00:04:12,709 --> 00:04:15,018
peeking out and getting ready to fall

102
00:04:15,019 --> 00:04:17,629
back down to the earth. And I remember

103
00:04:17,630 --> 00:04:19,129
that well, you know, for some reason

104
00:04:19,130 --> 00:04:21,798
there's different memories and

105
00:04:21,799 --> 00:04:24,419
and images that have really

106
00:04:24,420 --> 00:04:26,339
solidified in my mind and I remember

107
00:04:26,340 --> 00:04:29,399
this small little piece of debris just

108
00:04:29,400 --> 00:04:30,959
kind of floating across in front of my

109
00:04:30,960 --> 00:04:34,409
face and looking up and seeing our 0g

110
00:04:34,410 --> 00:04:36,329
indicators just kind of floating there,

111
00:04:36,330 --> 00:04:40,169
and realizing that hey, you know, this

112
00:04:40,170 --> 00:04:42,419
must be what space is gonna feel like,

113
00:04:42,420 --> 00:04:46,109

but yet, not today. And then the

114

00:04:46,110 --> 00:04:49,469

next thing I remember hearing was the

115

00:04:49,470 --> 00:04:51,629

interpreter, who was interpreting Russian

116

00:04:51,630 --> 00:04:53,669

for me because I don't speak Russian as

117

00:04:53,670 --> 00:04:56,429

you do. The interpreter, I heard her say

118

00:04:56,430 --> 00:05:00,449

six point seven Gs. And and that was the

119

00:05:00,450 --> 00:05:02,459

first time I really realized something

120

00:05:02,460 --> 00:05:06,809

was absolutely not right. So after a

121

00:05:06,810 --> 00:05:09,179

period of time you were weightless. Then

122

00:05:09,180 --> 00:05:11,099

the onset of G's as you do the

123

00:05:11,100 --> 00:05:13,889

ballistic reentry, is that, how long

124

00:05:13,890 --> 00:05:15,269

did that take before you got to that

125

00:05:15,270 --> 00:05:19,679

level? Yeah so, you know, that ball is

126
00:05:19,680 --> 00:05:21,419
coming down, you know, our capsule is

127
00:05:21,420 --> 00:05:23,309
falling back down to the earth and the

128
00:05:23,310 --> 00:05:25,109
way it's going to slow down to get us to

129
00:05:25,110 --> 00:05:26,699
a point where we can open the chutes is

130
00:05:26,700 --> 00:05:28,339
just aerodynamic drag.

131
00:05:28,340 --> 00:05:31,649
And so those G's are the result of that

132
00:05:31,650 --> 00:05:34,919
drag and it was probably, you know, a

133
00:05:34,920 --> 00:05:37,139
handful of minutes before it started to

134
00:05:37,140 --> 00:05:40,139
really peak up, luckily for us, the peak

135
00:05:40,140 --> 00:05:43,829
and G was not sustained for that

136
00:05:43,830 --> 00:05:46,709
long, you know, it felt like we were at

137
00:05:46,710 --> 00:05:49,399
elevated G's from maybe 20 seconds or so

138
00:05:49,400 --> 00:05:51,959

and and we've done training in the

139

00:05:51,960 --> 00:05:54,629

centrifuge to higher levels than that to

140

00:05:54,630 --> 00:05:57,569

eight G's for 30 seconds and so

141

00:05:57,570 --> 00:06:01,289

you're trained on how to properly

142

00:06:01,290 --> 00:06:03,869

breathe. It's not the same as my

143

00:06:03,870 --> 00:06:06,359

experience or your experience,

144

00:06:06,360 --> 00:06:08,699

you know, flying aircraft in the

145

00:06:08,700 --> 00:06:10,499

military those G's are from your head to

146

00:06:10,500 --> 00:06:12,179

your rear end and they try to pull the

147

00:06:12,180 --> 00:06:15,209

blood out of your head, these

148

00:06:15,210 --> 00:06:16,709

G's are coming straight at us

149

00:06:16,710 --> 00:06:18,779

pushing down on our chest and so it

150

00:06:18,780 --> 00:06:20,249

really is a matter of trying to learn

151
00:06:20,250 --> 00:06:23,039
how to keep your chest open so that you

152
00:06:23,040 --> 00:06:25,589
can take a breath of air in and keeping

153
00:06:25,590 --> 00:06:27,149
those muscles flexed and then trying to

154
00:06:27,150 --> 00:06:29,369
use your abdomen to move your

155
00:06:29,370 --> 00:06:31,109
diaphragm so that you can breathe in and

156
00:06:31,110 --> 00:06:33,479
out. But the training was great, it was

157
00:06:33,480 --> 00:06:36,059
everything I had expected to be able to

158
00:06:36,060 --> 00:06:37,679
do under that G load.

159
00:06:37,680 --> 00:06:40,888
When I heard 6.7 G and of course, I was

160
00:06:40,889 --> 00:06:43,978
listening to the interpreter, but my

161
00:06:43,979 --> 00:06:45,659
recollection was that that was your

162
00:06:45,660 --> 00:06:49,008
voice that was speaking, is that correct?

163
00:06:49,009 --> 00:06:52,168

Yeah, we were calling out all

164

00:06:52,169 --> 00:06:54,719

kinds of things at that moment, you know,

165

00:06:54,720 --> 00:06:56,369

Alexei was primed for making

166

00:06:56,370 --> 00:06:59,279

communication with the ground but you

167

00:06:59,280 --> 00:07:02,849

know we're talking to each other

168

00:07:02,850 --> 00:07:04,379

the whole time and then when we're

169

00:07:04,380 --> 00:07:06,059

talking to each other anytime he hits

170

00:07:06,060 --> 00:07:07,769

the transmit button, anything that we're

171

00:07:07,770 --> 00:07:09,839

saying from either position gets

172

00:07:09,840 --> 00:07:11,489

transmitted to the ground, so

173

00:07:11,490 --> 00:07:13,589

there's probably a few snippets of me

174

00:07:13,590 --> 00:07:17,599

talking back and forth to him and it's,

175

00:07:17,600 --> 00:07:21,149

you know, the training kicks in.

176

00:07:21,150 --> 00:07:23,668

We spend a lot of time, elbow to elbow,

177

00:07:23,669 --> 00:07:26,038

crammed in that capsule practicing this

178

00:07:26,039 --> 00:07:28,319

these situations, yeah, and you know when

179

00:07:28,320 --> 00:07:30,149

I'm in Star City, all of that is in

180

00:07:30,150 --> 00:07:33,448

Russian so, yeah. It just becomes

181

00:07:33,449 --> 00:07:35,249

reflex. Well, that was one thing that

182

00:07:35,250 --> 00:07:37,469

really took me by surprise, I had to

183

00:07:37,470 --> 00:07:40,499

think how much duress you must be under

184

00:07:40,500 --> 00:07:43,168

that obviously this is now a failed

185

00:07:43,169 --> 00:07:45,209

launch, the launch abort system has taken

186

00:07:45,210 --> 00:07:48,059

place, you're going from, you know, a zero

187

00:07:48,060 --> 00:07:50,279

gravity position to a six point seven

188

00:07:50,280 --> 00:07:54,779

gravity, you know, G position and I

189

00:07:54,780 --> 00:07:56,969

remember thinking, everybody sounds

190

00:07:56,970 --> 00:07:58,978

calm and you're still speaking in

191

00:07:58,979 --> 00:08:02,609

Russian, which means

192

00:08:02,610 --> 00:08:04,888

these are not unfamiliar to you.

193

00:08:04,889 --> 00:08:06,658

You have practiced this kind of thing

194

00:08:06,659 --> 00:08:11,249

before and and I was just kind of

195

00:08:11,250 --> 00:08:14,098

in awe of it all because at no point did

196

00:08:14,099 --> 00:08:16,379

I hear you break into English and yet

197

00:08:16,380 --> 00:08:18,478

you had to be, you had to be wanting to

198

00:08:18,479 --> 00:08:23,279

say things in your own language. There

199

00:08:23,280 --> 00:08:24,569

were a lot of things I probably wanted

200

00:08:24,570 --> 00:08:27,598

to say, right. But the world was watching.

201

00:08:27,599 --> 00:08:30,989

So you controlled yourself, I see.

202

00:08:30,990 --> 00:08:33,239

Well you know, you realize,

203

00:08:33,240 --> 00:08:35,689

you're in a tough spot and

204

00:08:35,690 --> 00:08:38,908

the thing that you can do to get to give

205

00:08:38,909 --> 00:08:41,009

yourself the highest chance of success

206

00:08:41,010 --> 00:08:44,158

is to just focus and stay calm and do

207

00:08:44,159 --> 00:08:45,599

the things that you were trained to do.

208

00:08:45,600 --> 00:08:48,749

You know, the guys at the cosmonaut

209

00:08:48,750 --> 00:08:51,239

training center in Star City, it's a

210

00:08:51,240 --> 00:08:51,869

robust

211

00:08:51,870 --> 00:08:54,539

training system, they have put us through

212

00:08:54,540 --> 00:08:56,789

every possible failure they put us

213

00:08:56,790 --> 00:08:58,619

through, a failure, you know, very similar

214

00:08:58,620 --> 00:09:00,749

to this with a rocket failure, so we've

215

00:09:00,750 --> 00:09:03,269

seen all of these and it's just a matter

216

00:09:03,270 --> 00:09:05,278

of trying to harness the training that

217

00:09:05,279 --> 00:09:07,019

they've given us and put it into action

218

00:09:07,020 --> 00:09:09,929

and so you know, I'd like to take credit

219

00:09:09,930 --> 00:09:12,059

for, you know, being, you know, calm and

220

00:09:12,060 --> 00:09:14,039

collected and knowing exactly what to do,

221

00:09:14,040 --> 00:09:15,869

you know, the real credit goes to all

222

00:09:15,870 --> 00:09:17,939

those instructors that have spent the

223

00:09:17,940 --> 00:09:20,249

last two years making sure I'd know what

224

00:09:20,250 --> 00:09:22,169

to do in those situations. Well, Nick,

225

00:09:22,170 --> 00:09:25,588

we're all so proud of you and so

226

00:09:25,589 --> 00:09:27,329

impressed by what you've been able to do.

227

00:09:27,330 --> 00:09:30,419

Let me ask you after going through a

228

00:09:30,420 --> 00:09:32,939

period of G's, at some point it had to

229

00:09:32,940 --> 00:09:34,349

start lessening as you went into a

230

00:09:34,350 --> 00:09:36,838

freefall within the atmosphere, followed

231

00:09:36,839 --> 00:09:40,109

by the deployment of the parachutes, what

232

00:09:40,110 --> 00:09:44,389

were you thinking at that time? Yes, so

233

00:09:44,390 --> 00:09:46,079

after the G's

234

00:09:46,080 --> 00:09:48,269

started to drop off, we

235

00:09:48,270 --> 00:09:49,409

were getting ready for the parachute

236

00:09:49,410 --> 00:09:52,499

deployment I'd been told many times that

237

00:09:52,500 --> 00:09:54,599

the, so at that point, after that peak and

238

00:09:54,600 --> 00:09:57,629

G, it's a nominal landing. All of the

239

00:09:57,630 --> 00:09:59,519

actions that are going to occur are

240

00:09:59,520 --> 00:10:01,079

things that we've practiced hundreds of

241

00:10:01,080 --> 00:10:03,719

times. What we haven't practiced is all

242

00:10:03,720 --> 00:10:06,088

the physical sensations that go along

243

00:10:06,089 --> 00:10:08,759

with those nominal landings and so I had

244

00:10:08,760 --> 00:10:11,249

a note written in my procedures, hey, when

245

00:10:11,250 --> 00:10:12,749

the parachute opens there's going to be

246

00:10:12,750 --> 00:10:15,899

five to six G's of lateral side to side

247

00:10:15,900 --> 00:10:18,449

swinging back and forth, and so before

248

00:10:18,450 --> 00:10:20,338

the chutes open we're trying to collect

249

00:10:20,339 --> 00:10:22,528

all of our loose items that

250

00:10:22,529 --> 00:10:24,119

are in the capsule, and make sure that

251
00:10:24,120 --> 00:10:26,519
once this opens, those aren't going to

252
00:10:26,520 --> 00:10:28,469
become projectiles inside the capsule,

253
00:10:28,470 --> 00:10:31,829
yeah, and prepping for that. After that

254
00:10:31,830 --> 00:10:34,859
opens, hey, we've got a good shoot then,

255
00:10:34,860 --> 00:10:36,899
it was a little bit of me

256
00:10:36,900 --> 00:10:38,579
looking out the window and trying to

257
00:10:38,580 --> 00:10:41,549
assess how high up we were. Normally we'd

258
00:10:41,550 --> 00:10:44,669
have the rescue forces circling

259
00:10:44,670 --> 00:10:46,499
around and helicopters giving us updates

260
00:10:46,500 --> 00:10:50,699
on our altitude. We'd also have a an

261
00:10:50,700 --> 00:10:53,129
altimeter on the commander's arm that he

262
00:10:53,130 --> 00:10:54,838
would wear during landing. We didn't have

263
00:10:54,839 --> 00:10:56,939

those because you don't prep for those

264

00:10:56,940 --> 00:10:59,909

on launch, and so it was my eyeball out

265

00:10:59,910 --> 00:11:01,409

the window going, hey, I think we're at

266

00:11:01,410 --> 00:11:03,869

10,000 feet or hey, we're at 5,000 feet

267

00:11:03,870 --> 00:11:05,729

and just kind of gauging as we were

268

00:11:05,730 --> 00:11:08,398

down, yeah, while I'm doing that, you know,

269

00:11:08,399 --> 00:11:10,768

Alexei is trying to make contact with

270

00:11:10,769 --> 00:11:13,229

the rest of the Tsar forces and

271

00:11:13,230 --> 00:11:16,018

get them to our location so that we can

272

00:11:16,019 --> 00:11:17,999

get extracted as quick as possible. And

273

00:11:18,000 --> 00:11:21,359

then right before touchdown, rockets fire,

274

00:11:21,360 --> 00:11:24,419

is that correct? Yeah so, in a standard

275

00:11:24,420 --> 00:11:25,888

landing, they're called soft landing,

276

00:11:25,889 --> 00:11:28,768

rockets, the soft landing thrusters help

277

00:11:28,769 --> 00:11:30,659

brace or help minimize some of that

278

00:11:30,660 --> 00:11:32,939

impact with the ground, you know, I got to

279

00:11:32,940 --> 00:11:34,708

tell you for a nominal landing, it's

280

00:11:34,709 --> 00:11:39,059

still a pretty amazing sensation. Someone

281

00:11:39,060 --> 00:11:42,328

I've heard recall it as riding, you

282

00:11:42,329 --> 00:11:44,489

know, a barrel off Niagara Falls and I'd

283

00:11:44,490 --> 00:11:46,588

say that it's pretty close to that. Wow.

284

00:11:46,589 --> 00:11:49,078

We hit the ground, as soon as we hit the

285

00:11:49,079 --> 00:11:49,619

ground,

286

00:11:49,620 --> 00:11:52,289

Alexei cut the riser to the parachute so

287

00:11:52,290 --> 00:11:54,239

it wouldn't drag us and then it felt

288

00:11:54,240 --> 00:11:57,119

like we bounced two or three times and

289

00:11:57,120 --> 00:11:58,828

tumbled and then finally skidded to a

290

00:11:58,829 --> 00:12:02,549

stop. It was a rough ride, but I

291

00:12:02,550 --> 00:12:03,989

got to tell you, when we skidded to a

292

00:12:03,990 --> 00:12:06,088

stop and I looked out the window and I

293

00:12:06,089 --> 00:12:09,749

was about 12 inches from dirt, I was

294

00:12:09,750 --> 00:12:12,388

at that moment, it was a huge, you know,

295

00:12:12,389 --> 00:12:14,669

sigh of relief and I was like, okay,

296

00:12:14,670 --> 00:12:15,388

we made it.

297

00:12:15,389 --> 00:12:17,609

What was your communication to Alexei at

298

00:12:17,610 --> 00:12:20,268

that point? We were grins ear to ear,

299

00:12:20,269 --> 00:12:22,648

looking at each other, giving each other

300

00:12:22,649 --> 00:12:27,028

you know a high-five, and you

301
00:12:27,029 --> 00:12:29,879
know cracking a couple jokes about it

302
00:12:29,880 --> 00:12:31,888
being, you know, a short flight or

303
00:12:31,889 --> 00:12:35,818
completely something unexpected, but it

304
00:12:35,819 --> 00:12:38,518
was just this sense of relief, you

305
00:12:38,519 --> 00:12:39,599
know, being able to look each other eye

306
00:12:39,600 --> 00:12:42,268
to eye and knowing, okay, wow, we

307
00:12:42,269 --> 00:12:44,578
just survived that. So how much were you

308
00:12:44,579 --> 00:12:47,659
hearing from Mission Control during this?

309
00:12:47,660 --> 00:12:50,789
Yeah, so you know, as soon as we were

310
00:12:50,790 --> 00:12:53,518
extracted from the rocket, and Alexei was

311
00:12:53,519 --> 00:12:57,208
reporting our condition, we were tied in a

312
00:12:57,209 --> 00:13:00,119
knot with Mission Control in Moscow,

313
00:13:00,120 --> 00:13:02,249

which is where we would normally talk

314

00:13:02,250 --> 00:13:04,559

once we've made it to orbit. But we're

315

00:13:04,560 --> 00:13:07,409

actually talking to flight controllers

316

00:13:07,410 --> 00:13:10,259

there and Baikonur, and so they were

317

00:13:10,260 --> 00:13:12,359

in contact with us, we were reporting

318

00:13:12,360 --> 00:13:15,648

that we were in good condition, we were

319

00:13:15,649 --> 00:13:19,099

trying to get their advice on ballistic

320

00:13:19,100 --> 00:13:20,899

decrease entry and activating that mode,

321

00:13:20,900 --> 00:13:22,669

and they were able to provide that

322

00:13:22,670 --> 00:13:25,729

to Alexei, and then we just continued

323

00:13:25,730 --> 00:13:28,849

reporting down. So, we had fairly good

324

00:13:28,850 --> 00:13:31,239

contacts throughout the entire flight.

325

00:13:31,240 --> 00:13:34,639

How long were you on the ground before

326

00:13:34,640 --> 00:13:37,159

the search-and-rescue crews got to where

327

00:13:37,160 --> 00:13:39,649

you were? When we landed and we skidded

328

00:13:39,650 --> 00:13:41,959

to this stop, we were kind of hanging

329

00:13:41,960 --> 00:13:43,549

from our straps inside the capsule

330

00:13:43,550 --> 00:13:46,489

because of the way the the capsule was

331

00:13:46,490 --> 00:13:48,589

oriented on the ground, and so we were

332

00:13:48,590 --> 00:13:50,029

trying to make the decision whether we

333

00:13:50,030 --> 00:13:52,009

were just gonna hang there and wait for

334

00:13:52,010 --> 00:13:53,779

them to come get us or we were gonna try

335

00:13:53,780 --> 00:13:56,419

to open our buckles and and maybe fall

336

00:13:56,420 --> 00:13:58,369

in the capsule, and then try to figure

337

00:13:58,370 --> 00:13:59,869

out how to open the hatch when we're

338

00:13:59,870 --> 00:14:01,759

standing on top of it.

339

00:14:01,760 --> 00:14:05,089

The SAR forces had almost you know

340

00:14:05,090 --> 00:14:07,069

within a minute or so of us being on the

341

00:14:07,070 --> 00:14:07,729

ground,

342

00:14:07,730 --> 00:14:10,849

they said they had visual on us and that

343

00:14:10,850 --> 00:14:12,769

they were gonna be, you know, on the order

344

00:14:12,770 --> 00:14:16,369

of 10-20 minutes to get to us. I guess

345

00:14:16,370 --> 00:14:19,459

I'd never realized, you know, so they had

346

00:14:19,460 --> 00:14:21,589

three pararescue jumpers that, as soon as

347

00:14:21,590 --> 00:14:23,539

they had found where we were at, you know

348

00:14:23,540 --> 00:14:25,879

the plane circling over, they jumped

349

00:14:25,880 --> 00:14:28,309

in to get to us as quick as they could

350

00:14:28,310 --> 00:14:31,279

and so it was a handful of minutes, and

351
00:14:31,280 --> 00:14:32,929
then somebody was tapping on the window

352
00:14:32,930 --> 00:14:35,269
next to me giving me the, you know, the

353
00:14:35,270 --> 00:14:37,279
okay symbol and I was answering back

354
00:14:37,280 --> 00:14:39,439
with a big smile and then they had the

355
00:14:39,440 --> 00:14:42,709
hatch open, so I was just amazed at their

356
00:14:42,710 --> 00:14:45,709
response and that, you know, you got to

357
00:14:45,710 --> 00:14:47,539
think that they haven't practiced, so you

358
00:14:47,540 --> 00:14:48,829
know, they practiced this all the time

359
00:14:48,830 --> 00:14:50,239
but they haven't had to put it to use

360
00:14:50,240 --> 00:14:53,359
right in 35 years, yeah, and for them to

361
00:14:53,360 --> 00:14:56,419
just respond the way they did is a

362
00:14:56,420 --> 00:14:58,609
true testament to the how serious they

363
00:14:58,610 --> 00:15:00,829

take their responsibilities and

364

00:15:00,830 --> 00:15:03,679

their job. Well, it was an amazing

365

00:15:03,680 --> 00:15:06,789

day and I know it was a mission failure,

366

00:15:06,790 --> 00:15:09,979

but it was as successful of a failure as

367

00:15:09,980 --> 00:15:13,339

you can possibly have and I just hope

368

00:15:13,340 --> 00:15:15,019

you know, Nick, how proud your whole

369

00:15:15,020 --> 00:15:18,229

country is of you. I hope you know, I hope

370

00:15:18,230 --> 00:15:21,619

all of America knows how proud they

371

00:15:21,620 --> 00:15:25,549

should be of the agency, of NASA, of the

372

00:15:25,550 --> 00:15:27,319

engineers,

373

00:15:27,320 --> 00:15:29,299

the mission controllers, and of course,

374

00:15:29,300 --> 00:15:32,479

the astronauts. I will tell you, this was

375

00:15:32,480 --> 00:15:35,089

my first launch as the NASA

376

00:15:35,090 --> 00:15:38,619

Administrator for me to attend and

377

00:15:38,620 --> 00:15:42,519

just to have the opportunity to see,

378

00:15:42,520 --> 00:15:46,309

you know, the Russian counterparts to

379

00:15:46,310 --> 00:15:50,479

America's crew just demonstrate such

380

00:15:50,480 --> 00:15:53,809

excitement when they realized that

381

00:15:53,810 --> 00:15:55,399

you were safe, that you were coming down

382

00:15:55,400 --> 00:15:57,819

safely, that you were gonna land safely,

383

00:15:57,820 --> 00:16:02,779

watching our engineers and our mission

384

00:16:02,780 --> 00:16:04,999

controllers embrace the Russian

385

00:16:05,000 --> 00:16:06,499

engineers and the Russian mission

386

00:16:06,500 --> 00:16:09,439

controllers, it was a sight to behold. And

387

00:16:09,440 --> 00:16:11,959

I know that before you launched, I had

388

00:16:11,960 --> 00:16:13,849

the opportunity to speak to you and I

389

00:16:13,850 --> 00:16:16,159

said that your mission is not just one

390

00:16:16,160 --> 00:16:18,319

of science and discovery, it's not just

391

00:16:18,320 --> 00:16:20,989

of exploration, but it's one of diplomacy,

392

00:16:20,990 --> 00:16:24,079

and Nick, I can tell you that

393

00:16:24,080 --> 00:16:27,319

diplomacy was on full-display as we saw

394

00:16:27,320 --> 00:16:30,469

two nations that, in many cases, are not

395

00:16:30,470 --> 00:16:32,629

aligned and in fact, our interests

396

00:16:32,630 --> 00:16:35,119

diverge in so many ways, but when it

397

00:16:35,120 --> 00:16:36,889

comes to space exploration we've always

398

00:16:36,890 --> 00:16:38,839

been able to put those things aside and

399

00:16:38,840 --> 00:16:41,649

work together, hand in glove,

400

00:16:41,650 --> 00:16:45,139

and that was on full-display. For me, as

401
00:16:45,140 --> 00:16:47,809
the NASA Administrator to watch. It was

402
00:16:47,810 --> 00:16:51,709
just amazing. And then once you guys got

403
00:16:51,710 --> 00:16:54,379
back to Baikonur, and I had the

404
00:16:54,380 --> 00:16:56,089
ability to see you firsthand and, of

405
00:16:56,090 --> 00:16:58,689
course, spend some time with your family.

406
00:16:58,690 --> 00:17:03,769
It was emotionally draining for others,

407
00:17:03,770 --> 00:17:06,139
probably even more than me, certainly for

408
00:17:06,140 --> 00:17:10,549
you, but I will tell you the relationship

409
00:17:10,550 --> 00:17:12,259
between the United States and Russia in

410
00:17:12,260 --> 00:17:15,049
space is probably as strong now as it's

411
00:17:15,050 --> 00:17:18,499
ever been and your mission was truly

412
00:17:18,500 --> 00:17:20,779
a mission of diplomacy, so we are all so

413
00:17:20,780 --> 00:17:23,419

grateful for you and I just hope all

414

00:17:23,420 --> 00:17:27,319

of America understands how amazing this

415

00:17:27,320 --> 00:17:29,869

NASA family is because I got to see it

416

00:17:29,870 --> 00:17:30,499

firsthand,

417

00:17:30,500 --> 00:17:33,619

really, for the first time and I was

418

00:17:33,620 --> 00:17:37,099

blown away, so thank you for what you do.

419

00:17:37,100 --> 00:17:39,539

Thank you sir, I appreciate the kind

420

00:17:39,540 --> 00:17:41,989

words. I couldn't agree with you more,

421

00:17:41,990 --> 00:17:46,259

being able to fly on a Soyuz and

422

00:17:46,260 --> 00:17:50,099

participate in all of that training and

423

00:17:50,100 --> 00:17:53,789

get that exposure to Russia, and to

424

00:17:53,790 --> 00:17:56,519

the people that compose that comprise

425

00:17:56,520 --> 00:17:59,308

the organization over there, I can

426

00:17:59,309 --> 00:18:02,069

tell you that I was not surprised by

427

00:18:02,070 --> 00:18:03,869

their support and how well they worked.

428

00:18:03,870 --> 00:18:05,939

It's on display every day over

429

00:18:05,940 --> 00:18:08,909

there and it's just a privilege to be a

430

00:18:08,910 --> 00:18:11,279

part of that. I have to say that, you know,

431

00:18:11,280 --> 00:18:13,499

for a first flight for me, it was, it was,

432

00:18:13,500 --> 00:18:15,299

extremely memorable. I'm sure you'll

433

00:18:15,300 --> 00:18:18,329

never forget it. But I would be remiss if

434

00:18:18,330 --> 00:18:20,069

I didn't invite you to my next flight,

435

00:18:20,070 --> 00:18:22,079

whenever that might be. You can count on

436

00:18:22,080 --> 00:18:25,199

it. I will be there, and next time we will

437

00:18:25,200 --> 00:18:26,639

get you to the International Space

438

00:18:26,640 --> 00:18:31,049

Station. Okay, sounds good. Nick,

439

00:18:31,050 --> 00:18:32,129

you're an American Hero,

440

00:18:32,130 --> 00:18:34,889

and our whole country is very proud

441

00:18:34,890 --> 00:18:37,769

of you. And you have an amazing family

442

00:18:37,770 --> 00:18:41,428

and please share my regards with your

443

00:18:41,429 --> 00:18:43,409

wife and with your kids and with your

444

00:18:43,410 --> 00:18:46,259

mom and dad, it was amazing to see them

445

00:18:46,260 --> 00:18:48,419

as well and they handled it with so much

446

00:18:48,420 --> 00:18:51,149

grace, it was incredible. Will do, sir. All

447

00:18:51,150 --> 00:18:53,119

right. Thank you so much.

448

00:18:53,120 --> 00:18:55,889

Well, thank you for watching Watch This

449

00:18:55,890 --> 00:18:57,928

Space, I'm NASA Administrator Jim

450

00:18:57,929 --> 00:19:00,058

Bridenstine, you can follow me on Twitter

451

00:19:00,059 --> 00:19:02,909

@JimBridenstine and of course, if you