

The issue of Flight Plans to the press was a further example of the Open Information Policy of the American Authorities which I have praised before: [See Titles 107 + 110]. One consequence was that we could synchronise our own times of eating, sleeping and working with those of the astronauts and thus avoid missing crucial events, like the first steps on the Moon's surface. It also allowed radio and television reporters, who had come from many different Time Zones on Earth, to inform their Home Offices of the most suitable times for broadcasting. Naturally preference in timing, where possible, was given by NASA to the United States, so that maximum publicity was achieved for those who had paid the estimated \$ 22 billion for the whole of the Apollo Programme.

From the beginning of Apollo 1, I had saved and collected all official NASA documents of all flights, and later in London had them bound in hard cover cloth. For several of the later flights this amounted to more than one volume and at the end of the whole Apollo Saga, I had a long shelf of these precious historical records. Through my good friend, Frederick I. Ordway III, I donated them years later to the Space Museum in Huntsville, Alabama, where I trust they can today be consulted by interested scholars. It was at Huntsville that Wernher von Braun had designed and perfected the Saturn V Rocket, and where now a Museum for the Apollo Saga is established.

The Launch will always be unforgettable for me. Press buses collected us from our Motels in the middle of the night, and three hours before launch zero we were seated in the Press Stands, 5.6 km from where the Saturn V Rocket was standing, brilliantly lit in the predawn darkness. Loudspeaker comments came clearly and undistorted every few minutes, and I recorded them all in my notes, with exact times. "This is Mission Control at T minus 2 hours and counting. The hatch of the CSM is closed, the Earth atmosphere has been purged. The launch vehicle is Go." The comment of Arthur C. Clarke, at Mission Control, was also broadcast: "The last day of the old World."

It was a truly international crowd on the Press Stand. On my left was the American painter Robert McCall, drawing every 30 minutes a pen and wash sketch as night changed into dawn, and dawn into daylight. On my right was a Japanese television commentator, Jonji Kitadai from the Tokyo Broadcasting Company, and behind me sat Hans Höfner from the Deutsche Presse Agentur.

We were told the breakfast menu of the astronauts: Steak, scrambled eggs; orange juice and coffee. The pressures in all fuel cells were checked, and at "T—15 seconds" guidance was switched to internal, and vast pale yellow flames bellowed from below the rocket. "We have lift-off". One second later, the deafening roar hit my chest physically. I have never forgotten it.