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Interview with Neil Alden Armstrong, Office Building 10B, NASA Hq.,
23 September 1971, with RS.

by [unclear]

Today, the day before he leaves NASA for a professorship at the University of Cincinnati, I finally had a long talk with the first man to set foot on the moon.* After an hour and a half of taping on my

*Not "the first man on the moon," his companion Buzz Aldrin points out (they landed ~~simultaneously~~ *separately*). Aldrin Interview of ten months ago.

small recorder, I invited Armstrong to lunch and we spent another hour and a half at the Federal City Club. He had so much time to spare that I actually ran out of questions (as usual, others occurred too late). It was as though Armstrong had packed all his documents, said all his goodbyes and had nothing whatsoever to do. The Administrator, Dr. James Fletcher, gave a small -- about forty -- cocktail party for Armstrong yesterday, and he was reluctant to accept that. Armstrong impresses me as not much of a mixer.

As we were riding back to the office after lunch he asked, "Do you hear much talk around here about my duty being to stick with NASA?" I said no, but I didn't get around much any more; in fact, this was my first interview in a month.

The second half of our three-hour session was not recorded, so I'll put down the notes on it, then add some material from the tapes themselves:

1. Armstrong is not one to ladel out the praise. When I asked him who, after all those years at MSC, stood out in talent and ability, he grinned and said, "Emil Schiesser! I'd vote for Emil every time." I had never heard the name before; I looked it up upon returning to the office and find that Schiesser is in the Orbit Determination Section (was section head in 1968, but not head in 1970) of the Mathematical Physics Branch of John Mayer's Mission Planning and Analysis Division.**

> The most valuable sessions in Houston were Bill Tindall's (approx.) weekly (GK) meetings. These amounted to a real education, says Armstrong. As for Bill's famous "Tindallgrams," he says, "I don't know how Bill got away with them. Nobody edited him, as everything else at Houston is edited. John Mayer let him have a free hand."

Chris Kraft's biweekly Software Configuration Control meetings were better than Low's Friday CCB's, "which got bogged down in minutae." Armstrong has some praise for Kraft: "He knew a lot." As much as his middle level engineers (who are Neil's heroes). "No, but almost."

**"If Emil said mascons were there, we had mascons there," said Armstrong grinning. Schiesser is slender, ascetic, intense, articulate, says Douglas Ward, PAC MSC today. Plotted Apollo 11 moon orbit and discovered at last minute perturbation that would cause landing 20,000 ft. downrange - as it was.

"The main thing is, the configuration control system worked. Every change, no matter how small, had to be approved," said Armstrong.

The quality of the middle-level engineers was more important than the organization, Armstrong insisted. I said I was amazed at how many of the engineers came not from MIT or Cal Tech or Purdue, but from small Tennessee, Texas and Alabama colleges. Well, they were fitted into jobs where they could perform. But, I said, that takes organization. He conceded the point.

2. Armstrong went to Purdue on the Holloway Plan, whereby he could go to school two years, then spend two or three years in the Navy before going back to graduate. At the end of his two years (1950 CK), Armstrong said he would take three years, please. But the Navy said, "You'll take two" -- the Korean War was on. Because of the war he stayed in the Navy three years. Then when he returned he went on the GI Bill, which contained provisions for graduate study which Holloway did not. Eventually he did not go into graduate study at Purdue because "I got the urge to fly." He says, "You know, there aren't many test pilots. When the chance came I had to grab it." There was no test pilot opening at first, so NASA put him at work at Lewis in Cleveland for a while (CK HOW LONG).

Armstrong went to Edwards to fly the X-15. He also attended USC, and by the time he became an astronaut he had completed his work for his master's degree excepting his thesis. In January 1970 he went to USC and was allowed to render his thesis orally, and was granted his M.S. I asked if this had been publicized, and he said he didn't think so, except locally.

How many honorary degrees did he have? Six, he said: Maryland, Ohio State, Notre Dame, Purdue, Miami of Ohio, Wittenberg. I said Jim Webb ^{HAD THIRTY} Armstrong: "I could have had that many if I had accepted them all."

He expects to do some studying at the University of Cincinnati "to make a better teacher." He will teach a couple of courses a quarter (CK). He confesses: "I don't write very well." He doesn't talk good sentences, either (as Norman Mailer constantly points out). Mailer calls it computerese, but I say it's unnecessary verbiage. Example: We talked about a WRESS questionnaire, of which one of Armstrong's pages was missing. Part of it concerned favorite cities and listed eight. Five years and history since the questions, Armstrong said today: "I wouldn't be able to answer that any more because I'm sure there have been so many influences// that would change your thinking in that kind of regard it would create a tenuousness (CK) and I wouldn't remember." ^{1/2} He could have said, "I would certainly give you a different answer five years later."

In addition to teaching, Armstrong admits that he will also be on display part of the time at Cincinnati. He said twice (once on tape) that "Cincinnati is not the end of the world." ⁸⁵ *Doesn't think life will be much quieter in Cincinnati*

Curiously, Armstrong pronounced the name of his lunch, a Reuben sandwich, "ribbon." He wolfed down the big sandwich in a third the time I took with my hot roast beef sandwich.

Although I had talked to Armstrong briefly perhaps a dozen times: a few words in Mission Control, ten minutes at a North American Rockwell party during the three-day delay in launching Apollo 9, a brief talk after one of his press conferences, I had never observed him close-up for several hours. Before seeing him today, I listed some of Mailer's characterizations: "breakfast food face," "as a speaker he was all but limp," "his humor was pleasant and small town, not without a taste of the tart," "there was something as hard, small-town and used in his face as the look of a cashier over pennies," "near to facetious smile," "if Armstrong's most recognizable passion was to safeguard his privacy, a desire which approached the force of sanctuary to him, then there was nothing on television he would be likely to reveal or betray," "he spoke with long pauses; he searched for words. When the words came out, their ordinary content made the wait seem excessive," "A shy smile. He was more wooden than young Robert Taylor, young Don Ameche, young Randolph Scott," "As a speaker, he was all but limp," "extraordinarily remote," "something peculiarly ~~sinister~~ innocent or subtly sinister was in the gentle, remote air," "he was apparently in communion with some string in the universe others did not think to play," "he had the hard, flat-eyed egocentric look of a kitten, eyes hardly cracked, who will someday be a cat."

Though obviously hostile -- Mailer clearly didn't like Armstrong from the beginning -- these characterizations have some merit as well as much sting. Armstrong's narrow blue eyes do give him a hard look. When he smiles his lips draw into a narrow line that makes him look more unpleasant than when unsmiling.

He is the consummate engineer and the consummate pilot. If ever a man were fitted for aeronautical engineering, Neil Armstrong is so motivated. And he is virtually without emotion. When I asked him about his thoughts during the brief, wild gyrations upon docking LM with CSM: ~~xxxxxx~~ did he think of Gemini 8? He answered: the docking gyrations were caused by his error (see below). As for Gemini 8, he didn't have time to think about anything except straightening things out. Apparently no premonitions of death, of farewell to loved ones, of anything except FIX THINGS UP. On the matter of the consummate engineer: the missing page of the questionnaire also asked "Imagine your destination is 'Twilight Zone' and you don't know for how long. You are ~~allowed~~ allowed five books. Which ones?" Armstrong answered (this is on tape): "I ^{picked} chose five books that would sum what I consider to be the most necessary parts of human knowledge. For example, one was Marks's Engineering Handbook -- not Karl Marx (it's actually "Marks' Standard Handbook for Mechanical Engineers," 7th Edition, 1967; It's Lionel S. Marks, prof. at Harvard). You can build anything from a steam engine to an underground shelter with Marks's Handbook. I picked major fields, not for my own entertainment but as a big hunk of human knowledge, so if starting a new civilization..." *900*

3. I asked Armstrong what he thought of von Braun. "Competent. They made some good boosters at Huntsville." Did he know Webb? "Slightly. The usual brief meetings." On Shea, he laughed lightly and said, "Anybody who wears red socks can't be all bad." He added: "He and I ~~never~~ didn't see eye to eye professionally. RECHECK REASON. I liked him personally." BELIEVE REASON: SHEA SLOPPY, RUSHED THINGS.

4. I mentioned that Shea said he probably wouldn't have gone to college ~~if~~ but for the V-12 program. "Anybody could go to school who wanted to, back in that time," said Armstrong, "When I went tuition was only \$150, and I lived on \$50 a month. You could get jobs, or work after school."

5. On the 204 fire: Armstrong was one of the five astronauts invited to the White House the afternoon of 27 January 1967 for the signing of the Outer Space Treaty (I had forgotten this). He and the others had returned to the Georgetown Inn by the time the fire took place.

6. "I never got into the Block I spacecraft. It was a shambles." Armstrong inclines to the theory that a complete redoing of the spacecraft -- LM and CSM, too -- was highly advantageous. "That extra year was a good thing. Maybe we lost six months, but we had much better spacecraft."

7. "I learned a lot about flying in the Navy," said Armstrong. (See below for more on his Korean War service). I mentioned that I had been on the Essex in January, 1945, and very glad of it because I had just got off the Ticonderoga, which was hit by kamikazes (with me watching from the Essex). He said the Essex was the only ship he served on. He had a squadron commander who had had three squadrons at age 33.

8. His sons, now aged 14 and 8, don't seem to mind moving to Cincinnati, though he had feared they would be dismayed at leaving the friends they had made in Washington. His little daughter who died was plunked in the middle between the two boys. I get the impression Armstrong isn't a string family man; rather, his job excludes his family ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ most of the time. He didn't volunteer a mention of his wife or sons during the three hours. I didn't ask him about the rumor (Parade Mag. 11 Apr. 1971, p. 4) of a romance between him and Connie Stevens (a singer?).

SO MUCH FOR UNTAPED PORTIONS (PLUS SMALL AMOUNT OF TAPED STUFF FOR SEQUENCE. HERE ARE SOME NOTES, NO REAL TRANSCRIPT, OF THE REST:

During the taping I learned a number of things I hadn't known about Armstrong, and got his corrected version of several published reports:

1. His ancestors on both sides were German farmers in Northwestern Ohio. The Scottish or Armstrong part of him is only 1/8 or 1/16 ^{-- 1/8!} all the rest is German. *Father's mother's name Koenig; mother's name Engel.*

2. Armstrong's mother is strongly religious, as Dodie Hamblin

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Neil's mother
Neil's father
Neil's brother
Neil's sister

writes. Her church, the Evangelical and Reformed, has been merged with the United Church of Christ. Neil was confirmed in the E & R, but is no longer a church member, though he attends churches, usually Protestant. His wife Jan was raised in the Congregational Church, but now attends Methodist services.¹²⁹ I asked Neil how Der Spiegel got the information that he was an atheist (1969?). "I think from a ~~washed-out~~ journalist who got it in for me because I wouldn't give her interviews." ~~This would be Sue Butler at Cape Canaveral, herself a German, thinks Doug Ward PAO MSC, to whom I talked today -- though he couldn't guarantee that~~

3. Is it true, as Wilford says (242, paperback) that you read 90 books during the first grade, so skipped the second grade? Actually, Armstrong says he read more than 100 books, but they were naturally thin children's books (rather, children's thing books), like Peter Rabbit. Armstrong skipped a grade because he moved from one school to another; from a better school to a weaker one, so he was advanced. Not second grade, though.³⁹⁷

4. Is it true that you, when an X-15 pilot, thought astronauts "were babes in the woods," and did you later conclude that you had "judged them wrong"? ~~xxxx~~ (Undated Life Armstrong interview, single-spaced, and Dodie Hamblin's piece 4 July 1969, which took much from that ~~xx~~ six (?) year-old interview). Yes, the X-15 looked like a better deal when the matter of astronauts first came up.³⁰ Astronauts looked better and better.

5. Wilford says (243, paperback) you apparently anticipated the end of Dynasoar when you applied as an astronaut? True? Well, yes, it was the time of Dynasoar, of Blue Gemini and other stirrings.⁴¹⁰

6. More on Korea: Is it true, as Hamblin says, Life, 4 July 1969, p. 20, that you coaxed a badly ~~scrambled~~ crippled jet back to the Essex? No, everybody's plane got a hole in the wing now and then, but Armstrong's only serious episode occurred when he bailed out over K-3, the Marine Corps base at Pohang (see Lt. Gen. Carson Roberts corresp.) (He did not bail out behind enemy lines, as Hamblin says).³⁵⁰ Armstrong was making a run on a target in a valley when he hit an anti-aircraft cable that was stretched across a section of the valley. "Just about six feet of the wing was missing." He coaxed the plane back to K-3, 120 ~~(mi)~~ miles south of the border and bailed out. Armstrong: "I've found that ~~key~~ is not ³⁵⁸ very careful."

7. Oriana Fallaci (299) quotes Armstrong as saying, "Seventy-eight combat missions. I'd be lying if I said they ~~did~~ me any good." To which he replies: ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ "It's not true. I learned a great deal."⁴⁰⁰ She further states: // Armstrong says: "It's all nonsense, kid stuff, just romanticism unworthy of our rational age. I rule out the possibility of agreeing to go up if I thought I might not come back, unless it were technically indispensable." Neil replies: "Does that sound like me?"⁴⁰⁰ He points out what I had forgotten: that Oriana says she is being exact ("This book is neither a novel nor reportage." vii).⁴³⁵ Compare Fallaci with Melchior's Hawaii

upset people in the islands. 650. It's at ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~book~~ ^{book} ~~is~~ ^{is} ~~different~~ ^{different} ~~to~~ ^{to} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~one~~ ^{one} ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~book~~ ^{book} ~~because~~ ^{because} ~~it~~ ^{it} ~~is~~ ^{is} ~~not~~ ^{not} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~same~~ ^{same} ~~as~~ ^{as} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~one~~ ^{one} ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~book~~ ^{book} ~~because~~ ^{because} ~~it~~ ^{it} ~~is~~ ^{is} ~~not~~ ^{not} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~same~~ ^{same} ~~as~~ ^{as} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~one~~ ^{one} ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~book~~ ^{book} ~~because~~ ^{because} ~~it~~ ^{it} ~~is~~ ^{is} ~~not~~ ^{not} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~same~~ ^{same} ~~as~~ ^{as} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~one~~ ^{one} ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~book~~ ^{book} ~~because~~ ^{because} ~~it~~ ^{it} ~~is~~ ^{is} ~~not~~ ^{not} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~same~~ ^{same} ~~as~~ ^{as} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~one~~ ^{one} ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~book~~ ^{book} ~~because~~ ^{because} ~~it~~ ^{it} ~~is~~ ^{is} ~~not~~ ^{not} ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~same~~ ^{same} ~~as~~ ^{as} 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didn't carry out very well...

family to try

8. What you think of Life contract in retrospect? "The idea was a good thing -- the only practical way to compromise between an unreasonable number of requests for availability, and getting those views before the public" -- ~~WHAT A WAY TO PUT IT~~ -- "but Life handled it badly. The would wait until the week of the deadline , then gin something up." Armstrong doubts that few people read words anyway, and adds, cynically, "Life is for those who ~~can't~~ read; ~~kx~~ Time for those who ~~can't~~ think/" 794

9. Wilford calls you (240) a shrewd player of the stock market. Armstrong smiles at this, "Anybody can do well when the market is going// up," and indicates he hasn't done well lately, 257

10. Regarding the choice of the moon landing crew, Mailer(326,327) says Slayton chose Armstrong -- "Let us make the assumption in the face of every published statement to the contrary, that Armstrong was Slayton's carefully considered choice...". Wrong, says Armstrong. "How could you pick the moon landing crew when you didn't know what the mission would be when you assigned the crew?" (CK EXACT QUOTES). 226
Armstrong had told Wm. B. Furlong in a WBESS interview in 1966 (in Armstrong's folder) that

Of course the first to land on the moon -- why, that's a considerably bigger thing -- but I would probably have to agree with those that said in this feat who the person is is sort of happenstance. The fact is, the whole program by design and by detail is the product of a lot of people's efforts and the one who is first to -- will be a matter of coincidence than plan. It's ~~the~~ not the same sort of thing as when Lindbergh crossed the ocean...This is the product of the desire of a whole society to do something. And there will be people who are identified by name to do it, but in this case it won't be the same. I suspect that there will be so many 'firsts' in this area now -- first to land on Mars, first to go to the astroid (CQ) belt, first to whiz by Jupiter and so on -- all this sort of thing. Those names will go in history, it's certain. But .."

(Anyway, ARMSTRONG'S SENTENCES OF 1971 WERE IMPROVEMENT OVER THE WAY HE SAID THINGS IN ~~1966~~ 1966).

A. was in closer, more intimate contact from Slayton than other flight commanders. 217

11. In this connection, had Armstrong heard of the 1966 plot to make almost certain that either McDivitt or Borman was the moon lander crew? No. 222

12. When Armstrong crashed in the LRV in May, 1968, wasn't he the only astronaut training in this "flying bedstead"? No, he thinks several others, including C. C. Williams. (NOTE: Notebook 172, p. 23 Williams told me he and Conrad would be the first to fly the "Flying Bedstead"..Williams was in crew with Conrad and Dick Gordon and figured he might be "in the crew to make the second or third landing on the moon, but nobody could predict." (Considering the date, 9 March 1967, this is damned good predicting. Bean, who replaced Williams after he crashed in October 1967, landed on the moon with Conrad, Apollo 12, 19 November 1969.

NOTE: IN connection with crew assignments, have just encountered something new (to me): on 22 Dec. 1966 second and third manned Apollo missions were named: AS 205/208 were (Prime): McDivitt, Scott, Schweickare and (back-up) Stafford, Young, Cernan. For AS-503, first manned Saturn V, Borman, Collins and Anders, with back-up: Conrad, Gordon, Williams. SO, when Borman was leapfrogged over McDivitt in late 1968 (C-prime), his back-up crew didn't go with him.

HOWEVER, after the fire in early 1967 crews were juggled, and on 20 Nov. 1967, crews were named for first two manned Saturn V's (Schirra & Co. being first Saturn IB): AS-504: McDivitt, Scott and Schweickart, with back-up this way: Conrad, Gordon, Bean (vice Williams). (At this time AS-503 was to be unmanned, like AS-502). second manned Saturn V: Borman, Collins, Anders, with back-up : Armstrong, Lovell, ~~Armstrong~~ Aldrin. (This one 504). THUS, switching Borman and McDivitt crews, plus eliminating E mission (Borman's), assured Armstrong's being the lunar lander (and Collins's neck injury put him on Apollo 11 instead of Lovell). BUT HOW MUCH DOES PUBLIC CARE? IT DOES PROVE THAT ARMSTRONG'S BEING FIRST ON THE MOON WAS -- as he predicted in 1966 -- HAPPENSTANCE.

Back to Armstrong interview:

13. Did you notice any jealousy, any sour grapes attitude when your crew was picked for Apollo 11 and, therefore, for the likely moon landers? No, said Armstrong, quite the contrary. Stafford and crew in particular were most helpful in working close to 11 crew to get all the information needed to make the descent. 670.

Yes, I said, but Stafford had told a friend of his how bitterly disappointed he was in not being chosen. Armstrong never noticed it. The things Stafford and crew were setting out to do were necessary before a moon landing could be practically attempted.

I said George Mueller wanted to skip the F mission (which meant Stafford & Co. could make the landing if the ~~11~~ were changed). Armstrong: "George Mueller would have started with the first flight as the ~~moon~~ ~~landing~~ if reason wouldn't have prevailed." (CQ). 676 When I mentioned that the moon landing wouldn't have been on time but for Mueller, Armstrong admitted, "There is no doubt that's true." 677

When I asked what was wrong with Mueller, Armstrong said, "It was impossible to reason with him," and told this illustrative but apocryphal story: "We would say there is no way to make the sun come up before tomorrow morning, and he would say, 'I don't care; make it come up at midnight.'" Armstrong explained: "I'm making this up. That kind of talk made it difficult for those people who were trying to keep the schedule and still have a safe operation." 713

always

transmitting (The transmitter is VOX. Operated - means it's not operating unless it gets the proper sound level. If you mouth is in the air stream - then it won't trigger the VOX. 148)

14. When did Armstrong determine to say, "The Eagle has wings" and "The Eagle has landed"? These were spontaneous expressions, as he recalled. 178

15. What about "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind"? Armstrong thought it up sometime after Eagle had landed and his EVA -- he doesn't know exactly. 156 (I mentioned that his wife said, "Neil is taking so long while he thinks of what to say," "First on the Moon," 258).

He didn't know whether he said "small step for a man" or not. He meant to put the "a" in. VOX is tricky. It might have dropped the "a". But on the other hand, Neil might have forgotten to say it (as I believe).

16. When did the crew determine to call the landing spot "Tranquility Base"? Before leaving, Neil told Charlie Duke, the CapCom the name ("if we were successful"), so he wouldn't come back, "What did you say?" Did the other crew members know? Armstrong wasn't sure. Thought not. (Aldrin says they discussed it and decided before launch, telling nobody except Charlie Duke: "Base indicated explorers." Aldrin interview of 4 December 1970). I told Armstrong George Low had told me he didn't know what the name was going to be. 144

17. Did Armstrong realize that President Eisenhower had used the phrase, "a giant leap into outer space" in 1957? No, but he wasn't surprised. He had in mind a game children played, "baby steps, giant steps." SO THAT'S WHERE IT ORIGINATED IN HIS MIND. SEE TRANSCRIPT IF IT IS EVER TRANSCRIBED. 137

18. What about the timeline which showed Aldrin, the LM Pilot, descending on to the moon first? Had Armstrong heard that during Apollo 9 Mueller was introducing Aldrin ~~xxxxxxx~~ as the first man on the moon (or wasn't it Aldrin's father as the father of the first man on the moon?). Armstrong: "No, but I believe it." 490

Armstrong's view of the time-line and how it was changed to make him, rather than Aldrin, ~~and~~ as first man on the moon:

"I don't really know the circumstances of the decisions but I do know we were working on the time-lines and working in the lunar module mock-up and working on procedures -- and the procedure that was first devised was the lunar module pilot being the first one to exit required the individuals to change positions, before before the exit and after getting back in, with full suits and back packs on, and we damaged the inside of the LM mock-up considerably doing that procedure. And also it turned out that the things that had to be done after exit were operation of the camera and the communication system, which were on the LM

module pilot's side, and those were the things that he was normally operating. From a practical point of view it really made much more sense to do it

Sherrod: "It was a physical thing then? I had never heard that."

Armstrong: "I think it the door would have opened the other way -- the hinges would have been on the commander's side -- then there might have been an even balance. But with the hinges being on the right-hand side of the door, in my view there is no question but what the current procedure is far better, far safer."

*Turn
considerable view*

"The reason it started that way is it's just a holdover from Gemini, where essentially the co-pilot did the EVA work. It just started that way but after looking at it in detail, it's clear it didn't make much sense."

Sherrod: I'd never ~~thought of it in that way~~ heard that. I thought George Low did it because he went to South America with you and he found you such a nice fellow." This seemed to tickle Armstrong.

Armstrong: "As I say, I don't know ^{anything about} how the decisions were made. I do know what was involved from our point of view in the development of procedures."

Sherrod: "It is sometimes said that you pulled your commander's rank and ..."

Armstrong: "I was never asked ~~for~~ my opinion." 530

19. I asked Armstrong if he had read the Mailer book. "No," he had read some of the magazine pieces. "I have never met Mr. Mailer," he said. "I understand ~~he got his material from a press conference.~~" *by inference to me is confined to one press conference and what he has heard. The people say - ...*

20. Was there any real worry about docking after lift-off from the moon? Mailer (429) speculates that Gemini 8 flashed through your mind, and Mike Collins says (DSE 225) that "That was quite a wild gyration for docking."

"No, it ~~was my~~ ^{inferred from the} error and I knew immediately why it happened," said Armstrong, ^{by inference} "when we got the little oscillation at capture we ~~hadn't~~ expected to see." 546

What was his error?

In a way quite many of the things that happened the way it did - it wasn't quite like a gyration

^{allowed} "I ~~locked~~ the platform to go into gimbal lock. In aligning the Eagle with Columbia I was looking out the top window, and flying the LM to the proper roll attitude for docking and didn't notice that we were getting close to gimbal lock and flew into gimbal lock."

... the little appearance ... 533

"Since we were flying digital auto pilot, as soon as we went into gimbal lock the auto pilot was no longer useful. It doesn't work without a stable platform reference. So that meant we had no ~~attack attitude~~ control system, so just as soon as it happened [here Armstrong snapped his fingers] we knew exactly what happened, so I switched to AGS, the abort guidance system, and flew on the alternate flight control system. I don't believe it has been done since then and I don't recommend it. Armstrong laughs. Probably had to do with the dynamics of the control system -- this oscillation within the AGS -- rather than being in digital auto pilot." 565

21. In Gemini 8, how did you calculate your chances of coming out of it, during the worst part of it?

"I wasn't calculating chances. I was just making sure that I was doing everything that I could think of to do."

Sherrod: A lot of people on the ground were ~~at~~ calculating chances, and they were awfully worried.

Armstrong: "It was a non-trivial situation." 574 THIS IS MY FAVORITE LINE OF ALL.

Armstrong
22. ~~Mailler~~ is cynical about the press. For openers -- even before the tape recorder started -- I mentioned the spliced tapes played at Dr. Fletcher's party for him yesterday: asking current questions and supplying answers from old tapes. Pretty funny.

Armstrong said such things are actually done. I said I didn't know anybody who would do such a thing in real life. He was doubtful. Then I asked him what was the most outlandish thing that had been ~~printed~~ printed about him? (Hoping perhaps he would comment upon published comment linking him romantically with Connie Stevens -- a singer?) He simply said he couldn't think of the most outlandish. 45 He said a magazine had quoted him as saying he disapproved of exercise because the human heart had only so many beats in it. "I was telling it, but in regard to someone else." (Meaning, I assume, he was quoting someone else). 72 BELIEVE THIS IS IN MAILER'S BOOK. BUT HOW DO YOU FIND ANYTHING; NO INDEX.

23. What happened to the DSEA? Armstrong wasn't sure what it was (recorded transcription on the moon, similar to DSE in command module). "I can't remember that it was ever brought to my attention." 585

24. How would he describe his tour of almost two years at NASA headquarters, where he was Deputy Associate Administrator (Aeronautics) in the Office of Advanced Research and Technology? Interesting? Frustrating? Disappointing? Reply: "Educational." 242

25. His observations on the Apollo 13 investigating board, on which he served soon after coming to NASA headquarters? "I had my faith restored in detective novels which have the hero looking into unrelated miniscule details with the hope that something is going to open up

effect of emergency

for several flights on it though we had everything we needed for making a return case for changing.

It was a good lesson for us.

and show the great (~~green~~) light. (Nobody questioned?). We had some data on tank pressures that we still didn't change our procedures. Pop the fans on for two seconds to watch the pressure. Then shut it off. But we went through ~~xx~~ rigorous one-minute-on, one-minute-off cycles. Just because they were there." RELISTEN BEFORE WRITING APOLLO 13). "Nobody ever *apparently* questioned anything that made good sense." 764

26. I mentioned to Armstrong that I had found an interview with him, by Bill Cromie, Feb. 1969, published in Sunday Star, 13 July 1969, in which he said if he weren't an astronaut, he would prefer, "... teaching or any other profession which would give me the opportunity for independent research." He: "I mentioned in ~~my~~ last press conference that those who knew me had known for ~~twenty~~ years that I had been considering teaching." (NOT EXACT QUOTES). 239 *over the*

27. What did he think of all the heel raised by the scientists after Apollo 11 mission in 1969? Who? he said. I mentioned Shoemaker, Hess, Persa Bell, others. Armstrong mentioned that Shoemaker had wanted to be an astronaut (Should I call him an astronaut manque?). News to me. Wasn't he too old? I asked. No older than Henize, he thought.

28. Did he receive the Guzman legacy, provided ~~in 1891~~ for the first man on the moon? He and Aldrin and Collins did receive it. The money wasn't invested, apparently, so the amount had ~~not~~ increased. Amouned to about \$2700, which they (the French?) put into medals. 293 (Incidentally, Armstrong's medals and other awards will go into the Armstrong Museum, run by the Ohio State Historical Society, in his home town, Wapakoneketa (SP?). 307 *Wapakoneketa* "except Mars which was too easy" 282

But, he said, the Guzman award was not for landing on the moon, but for making contact with other heavenly bodies. Interest in those bodies increased enormously after Sciaparelli discovered the canals of Mars in 1873. (Armstrong also said canali doesn't mean canals but grooves; he's wrong: scanalaturi (pl.) means grooves, according to the Spinelli Dizionario Scolastico. (CK -- this is middle side A). 263 Armstrong had told the Guzman story many times, long before Apollo. 298

29. I pointed out to Armstrong Mailer's p. 396-7, which quotes the PAO commentary "garble...garble...garble..." as has the author saying, "Something was conceivably interfering with their sense of order. Could it have been the lunar gravity?" It was inadequate transcribing, of course -- the technical air-to-ground gets nearly all of it straightened out. Armstrong: "I think it's amazing that we can hear anything from the moon at all." 206

30. A mystery at 10% into A side: I asked Armstrong about Mailer's writing re the Gemini 8 flight that Jan Armstrong got into mission control and seized the tapes. Rang no bell with A. He understands wives weren't allowed into Mission Control in Gemini 8 -- "not even in the viewing room." 62 Not permitted in after the emergency. Had been allowed in viewing room prior to Gemini 8 -- "in Gemini 4 the wives actually talked to their husbands by radio; that was the last time that was done." Armstrong doesn't believe his wife "was ever in the Control Center." Sherrrod: it was reported "she physically seized the tapes." Armstrong: That's

physically impossible, as you know." (Afterwards I spent many hours trying to find the Mailer account of Jan Armstrong seizing the tapes, which seemed so clear in my mind. No luck. Could I have dreamt I read this in Mailer? Ast^{well}g⁷⁵nishing.)

30 Aug 72
It's in Young's
Sillock + beam
"Journey to Tran-
quility" 125.

31. The Apollo 11 crew edited some parts of "First on the Moon," but not all. I asked Armstrong if he recalled telling me in Mission Control that he was going to make Time-Life take his name off the book. His only reply, "It's possible." 200

32. I asked Armstrong if his and John Glenn's names weren't the only two among the astronauts that were known to the public before their NASA days (Glenn as transcontinental record holder in 1957, Armstrong as X-15 record breaker (there are nine entries for him in 1962 A & A). He said Slayton and Shepard were well known test pilots, relatively, in their field. Dick Gordon also won the Bendix transcontinental race (see 24 May 1961 A & A, p. 22; he and his RIO officer, Lt. (j.g.) B. R. Young averaged 870 mph, making 2,421.4 mi. in 2 hours, 47 minutes, in F4H Phantom II. (Glenn won it in 1957 in Chance Vought F8U-1 Crusader, averaging 760 mph.)

33. (Among other errors the press has made about Armstrong is one quoting him

see p 16 para 22

33. Armstrong has been told one reason for choosing military test pilots for the first group of astronauts was because they had all the records handy -- so many inches, what education, qualifications, etc. 40. WHO said Ike personally decided on military test pilots? Journey to Tranquility?

34. I failed to draw Armstrong out on his world-wide travels after his mission. "I guess I could honestly say, with the exception of the world tour, there were none of those trips that I took against my will, or preferred not to make them. ... that's not true of all the domestic ones." "I didn'T say they were unpleasant; I said I didn't always participate in the decisions." 800

35. I asked Armstrong about his reading -- it appeared that he read more than most astronauts. He said he had had more time to read in the last two years than previously; I asked what he had read lately and he said, "That can't be pertinent to the Apollo history." 803