

## Launching Curiosity to Mars

Transcript:

(music)

Peter Illsley: There was this really amazing moment at the end here.

We were looking over the rover one last time and making sure that what we were seeing was good for flight.

It's that final moment you spend with the vehicle. That last sanity check.

Does everything look right? Is anything out of place? Is it really ready to fly?

Because we're about to send our baby on a long journey to go spend its life exploring the surface of Mars.

That's uh... that's a big leap of faith to be able to hand off the vehicle.

They have a great team on the launch vehicle side and they're ready to take care of her.

But we are... we are definitely nervous parents.

(music)

Art Thompson: It's a very happy and sad day when you launch her.

It's very much, I equated to say, having your daughter get married.

We basically brought her into existence and powered her up and spoke to her and our team understands how she reacts.

Her emotions, her idiosyncrasy she's been ours along and now I'm going to hand her off to the next team.

And they will get to run her, they've always been on deck waiting for us to get out of the way.

As launch approaches, of course, the pressure does wrenched it up and you start to worry.

Did we think of everything that could possibly go wrong, do we have all our procedures ready.

There are a lot of what ifs and you question yourself and your team. Are you ready to handle this.

But ultimately you know that you have been trained to do this, and you are ready to do this

And you gotta great team around you. And you gotta a great space craft ready to go.

And you ask if I'm nervous, the answer is absolutely I'm nervous

Ah I'm I confident that she's gonna go and she's gonna be successful absolutely.

It's gonna go and she'll be good.

Dellen Stommen: The other day we closed the two hatches up on the Atlas and I was able to touch that.

I was able to touch the rover when I disconnected the purge from the RAD system.

And that was kind of an emotional thing you know

I almost turned and walked away from it, and QA was all like 'Dellen, Dellen wait a minute.

This is the last time you gonna be able touch this thing'.

And I'm like it really is true and here I'm stroking it like a little puppy.

And I had to walk away from it, and to realize that it's almost done.

And then it's ready to go you are almost kind disappointed that it's over with

But you're ready to move on to somethin else.

And I'm ready to crack that champagne open when that thing lights and goes.

And we gotta wait till August of next year to see it do its business.

And that's what it's all about, say that's a great feeling.

(music)

Joel Krajewski: There is this golden couple of weeks that happens just before launch.

Which is that um.. we are really kind of done testing and we're done capsulating the vehicle.

It's not part of the launch vehicle providers job to get it integrated and mount it on top of the rocket.

And as far as the spacecraft goes it's kind of quiescent.

When you see what a rocket really does in practice, it's an amazing thing when it works.

Charlie Bolden: Uh..the Launch Team is really excited so this is very difficult this morning

Launching something from the planet is really hard.

Now you all we make it look easy it's not.

(music)

Rocketry is still a less than perfect business, failures do happen.

You kind of have to make your peace with the notion, it's like a suspension of disbelief.

Meaning that in order to get through it you have to believe that rocket launches can only go perfectly.

The good news is almost always they really do, and it's really a thrill when it's over

Audience: '6! 5! 4! 3! 2! 1!' (applauding)

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