

Apollo 13 - paper 2



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On April 11th 1970 the Apollo 13 Lunar Mission launched from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida. Aboard Apollo 13, 3 astronauts—Jim Lovell, Jack Swigert and Fred Haise—were seeking to be the third mission to land on the moon. 56 hours into the flight the members of the ground crew of Mission Control in Houston, Texas listened as the 5 words NASA never wants to hear resonated through the speakers: “ Houston we have a problem. ” These words were immortalized during the apprehensive days of the Apollo 13 lunar mission crisis. Additionally, it can be said that Apollo 13 was one of the greatest success stories of human achievement and triumph. Director Ron Howard recreated these epic and historical events in the 1995 movie Apollo 13. The Apollo 13 theatrical movie trailer provides insight condensing the events of Apollo 13. Furthermore, it illustrates the true, real life narrative that depicts the prevailing nature of human will and the spirit to overcome such adversity. Furthermore the comradely of the flight crew and the ground crew in Houston, along with the support, thought and prayer from the entire world as they watched the subsequent events of the disaster unfold, illuminates the miracle that was Apollo 13, and proves one thing. Failure is not an option. The binary scenes between the flights crew in space and the ground crew in Houston depict the collective action of both parties and the importance of teamwork in accomplishing a goal. Apollo 13 was not seen merely as one disaster but a series of “ cause and effect” disasters, each one building on the previous. In the face of this action the flight crew remained remarkably calm, analyzed the situation, communicated with the ground crew and took action. Similarly in Houston the ground team worked together as a team, analyzing the series of problems and working together to arrive at a assuredness of purpose and plan. The switching between the scenes in

space and those on the ground were fast, sporadic and at times overlapping, especially during the climax of the disaster. This exemplified the coinciding responsibilities and symbiotic relationship of both teams. As well, a major difficulty with the entire Apollo 13 disaster was that at that time nobody—flight or ground crew—knew exactly what happened and how to fix it. This is illustrated by the disjointing of each team through separation of the scenes (and scenery). The flight team was shown in outer space, floating in air (due to the absence of gravity), clad in full-fledged space suits. While the ground team was on earth working in a mission control room, and clothed in typical work-attire. The flight crew, being at the event, could not see the results of the initial explosion; while in Houston the ground crew was not in a much better position, however having some vital information from instruments in the spacecraft. All the while not understanding of the cause of the problem, as well as how dire the situation was, and only knowing it was deteriorating quickly. These binaries construct an understanding that one could not survive without the other; working together, teamwork, was their only option. Human will, and the spirit to overcome such adversity can be seen in the hard-work, dedication, sacrifice and trust demonstrated by the astronauts and the members of the ground team alike, especially with so much at stake—human life. In the end, “ what” broke on the Apollo 13 service module was never fixed. Instead, the ground crew came together and developed a plan of action with only one purpose: To safely return Apollo 13 to earth, and the flight crew only considered one ultimate outcome: returning to earth safely. Furthermore while focused on one united cause there was only one outcome, and it proved to be a miracle. As well, the true leadership and true vision of those involved in Apollo 13 serves as a

reminder anything is possible. Gene Krantz, Apollo 13's flight director exhibited true leadership. Gene is known for two quotes, both of which can be seen in the trailer: " Failure is not an option. " and " We've never lost an American in space; we sure as hell aren't going to lose one on my watch. His refusal to even consider failure as a possibility was a significant factor resulting in the return of Apollo 13 to earth. Although addressing the multitude of complex, compounding issues and problems facing the safe rescue of the flight crew, his perfect vision-seeing things not as they were, but as they will be-was important because it refused members of the team to engage in negative thinking. As well Lovell's wife when asked by news reported about the events voiced her positive thinking and determined attitude, " Take it up with my husband, he will be here on Friday. " The background music of the trailer crescendos along with the heightened intensity of the events. The statement by Lovell at the beginning of the trailer, " There is nothing routing about flying to the moon, " through irony foreshadows such an epic, out-of-the ordinary event. Ultimately, the Apollo 13 crew under these facts and circumstances and knowing that these astronauts barely survived the closest encounter with death in space; was nothing short of a real, true life miracle. The story is nonetheless true, and incredibly inspiring. The final scene of the trailer is a picture of earth in space with Apollo 13 across the screen. The simplicity of this final scene in contrast to the epic and immense event is somewhat overpowering and truly exemplifies Apollo 13 as one of the greatest success stories. The world stood still, watched and prayed for the safe return of the astronauts, and by overcoming all odds, they did return and in the most remarkable fashion. The success story of Apollo 13 should serve as a reminder that anything is

possible. One thing that is stressed in the trailer is the greatness and epic circumstances that encompass the Apollo 13 mission. There is significant focus on intensity and disaster showcased in the trailer, including climatic and expressive music, musical crescendos, extreme emotion, intense explosions, and fire blazed action. The content producers, however, chose to stress the scene in which the shuttle takes-off and when the tank of the command module explodes in space. The viewer can then relate and infer the relationship between the two events, and assume that the unthinkable happens, disasters strikes thus leaving the astronauts paramount mission-survival.