



THE FERMI PARADOX

A Tale of Space Travel

The Drake Equation told us that the Milky Way galaxy is teeming with intelligent life. Only when we listen, all we hear is silence. That is the Fermi Paradox. If there is intelligent life out there, why can't we talk to it? If they are out there, are they in hiding?

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JUNE 4th CAPE KENNEDY SPACE CENTER

Good afternoon, viewers. I'm Walter Herman and we're here to watch the launch of Iapetus, the first manned spacecraft designed to leave our solar system. Here at Launch Pad 39A, we'll see the crew compartment take off. Tonight, in Europe, Russia, and China, they'll be launching the booster sections for the trip. In orbit, the Rhea One, Two, and Three booster sections will join up with the Command Module to form the spacecraft that will take our intrepid crew on their long journey to the outer reaches of the solar system, out past the Heliosphere.

Walt, many of our viewers might not know that this flight is based on the ground-breaking work of Dr. Yuri Brzezinski.

That's right Denise. It was Dr. Brzezinski who calculated the Voyager II transmissions were being dispersed by a zone of interference around our solar system. In his calculations he noted by the time Voyager II got even halfway to the nearest star, its transmissions would look like interstellar background noise. But he also noticed that Voyager I, also outside the solar system was getting its partner's signal without any interference.

That's led to the Iapetus mission. A voyage to get passed the radio barrier and see if we can try to talk to other intelligent life forms in the galaxy. Walt, doesn't the radio barrier work just like the Ionosphere on earth, which bounces short wave radio signals back to the Earth's surface?

Exactly, Denise.

So why are we sending a manned mission and not, say, Voyager III?

Well, we're not sure if other solar systems have a barrier as well. The crew will be able to tell, once they are outside the barrier if the signals are being blocked.

The Iapetus will be using the new tetryon waves that move faster than the speed of light.

That's true Denise. Otherwise, the crew would have to spend more than their lifetimes just waiting to get a response...

SEPTEMBER 9th IAPETUS COMMAND MODULE, RAMÓN LOPEZ, COMMANDING

It's been a long flight. We just passed the gravity well of Jupiter. It's an astounding sight to see in person. No telescope or even a satellite picture does it justice. The colors, the clouds... simply breathtaking. It is just an astounding sight. From up here, we can see the volcano activity. We passed right by it when the moon went into an eclipse behind Jupiter. We all got to see the atmosphere collapse right before our eyes. There is no way to adequately describe the sight. The Jupiter insertion was a complete success. We're picked up a large boost in speed. Better than anticipated. Everything is running normally, although Dr. Keyes has taken to staying in the lab. This is a bit unusual for him as he tended to be a social animal both during training and the first part of the mission. I don't know if it's the long flight or just being this far away from home. I must admit, not being able to see the Earth as more than a tiny dot in the night sky influences you. We all miss home. It's a loneliness that goes right to a person's core.

SEPTEMBER 20th IAPETUS COMMAND MODULE, JACK KEYES, ASTRORESEARCH

The command crew has been acting odd lately. When I put in a request to use the ship's telescope for observations of Ganymede, they refused. Lopez insisted on it remaining pointed at Earth until further notice. I've never seen the NASA people be this short about anything before. I'm concerned this might be a little-understood effect of long-term spaceflight. After all, no one has ever been gone from the planet this long. I discussed this with Émile Norton, but she indicated it wasn't a real concern. She agreed to investigate it for me.

SEPTEMBER 20th IAPETUS COMMAND MODULE, ÉMILE NORTON, MISSION SPECIALIST

Today, Jack Keyes refused to allow CMDR Lopez to use the ship's telescope to make a manual check of the ship's course by aligning the telescope with Earth. He insisted on keeping the telescope centered on Ganymede for scientific study. Lopez decided to reschedule the alignment for tomorrow. He can still get a correct bearing then. It's the first argument I've seen onboard. Frankly, I surprised it's taken this long to flare up. We've been gone a long time; the quarters are close, and the work is exhausting. If this is the only argument we have for the whole trip I'd call it a complete success. We're all just people and we are bound to get on each other nerves sooner or later.

OCTOBER 10th IAPETUS COMMAND MODULE, RAMÓN LOPEZ, COMMANDING

The civilian staff seems to have stopped talking to the command staff. They now all stay isolated in the lab. We get the occasional email note from their workstations, but that's all. Everyone is getting their work done, but I'm concerned about the long-term effects on the crew's performance. Aborting the mission would be a huge waste of funds and resources. I must consider the sacrifices of everyone on Earth to get this craft up in space and on course. I don't want to disappoint anyone.

OCTOBER 11th IAPETUS COMMAND MODULE, ÉMILE NORTON, MISSION SPECIALIST

Dr. Keyes has approached me about the possibility of the civilian arm of the agency taking over the command of the ship. He's concerned about how removed the command staff has been lately. They are all ex-military and they seem to be taking military rank as a condition for discussing any of the mission parameters, even the scientific ones. The CMDR snapped at the civilians again, insisting that he'd earned the right to make decisions while making the clear implication they had not earned the same right. The civilian staff is naturally concerned.

OCTOBER 12th IAPETUS COMMAND MODULE, JACK KEYES, ASTRORESEARCH

I think I can now count on all the members of the civilian arm of the mission. We are all in complete agreement. The mission cannot proceed with the existing animosities onboard. We can't turn back now. There are the sacrifices of everyone on Earth to consider in regard to getting this craft up into space. People's dreams and hopes. We owe these people some kind of results for their efforts.

OCTOBER 14th IAPETUS COMMAND MODULE, ÉMILE NORTON, MISSION SPECIALIST

I think we have a serious problem. Dr. Keyes came to me and insisted that I choose sides. I tried to explain to him we were all on the same side but got a rather impassioned reply for my troubles. In the end, he issued an ultimatum, tell me I have 24-hours to make a determination. Civilian or Military.

OCTOBER 14th IAPETUS COMMAND MODULE, JACK KEYES, ASTRORESEARCH

Specialist Norton seems to have taken the other side. She is no longer receptive to logical arguments. When I spoke to her, she flew into a rage. Her voice was so high pitched I couldn't understand half of what she was trying to say. Part of our group was concerned this whole affair was the result of something spawned as a mutated bacterium and is now part of the filtered air. This seems highly unlikely. Why would it only affect the military members of the crew and Dr. Norton? We are still examining the air to see if there is some form of pathogen present. Some of the civilian crew have already taken to wearing surgical masks.

OCTOBER 15th IAPETUS COMMAND MODULE, RAMÓN LOPEZ, COMMANDING

I believe the civilian crew is attempting to put lethal chemicals in the air. Perhaps this is why they have been spending all their time in the lab, creating a toxin. We've noticed some of them are now wearing surgical masks. This is probably the toxin building team. I've ordered all the command crew into spacesuits. We'll breathe the air in the reserve tanks until we figure out what is happening.

OCTOBER 16th IAPETUS COMMAND MODULE, JACK KEYES, ASTRORESEARCH

The command crew is now wearing spacesuits inside the spacecraft. Dr. Reese went to check on our suits. They have all been damaged and are useless. This has confirmed some of the civilian staff's worst nightmares. We started to build special breathing masks in the lab from the remains of the suits. No one suspected the command staff would be skilled enough to attack us through the ship's atmosphere. This must have been why they were isolating themselves on the command deck.

OCTOBER 17th IAPETUS COMMAND MODULE, ÉMILE NORTON, MISSION SPECIALIST

Things have really gotten out of hand. All the spacesuits have been destroyed. The suit material has been torn to shreds. Still, both the civilian and the command crew have taken to wearing them, even though they no longer serve any purpose. At this point, even if I could convince anyone to turn the ship around, I don't think there would be anyone left alive on the ship by the time we returned to Earth.

OCTOBER 18th IAPETUS COMMAND MODULE, RAMÓN LOPEZ, COMMANDING

We found out the civilian staff has sabotaged the oxygen system. Rather than getting oxygen from the auxiliary tanks, we've been getting air to refill the suits from the spacecraft interior. Now it seems as if the whole thing was a ruse to get us into the suits in the first place. A clear attempt to concentrate what were they were putting in the air around the command staff. Well, it won't work.

OCTOBER 18th IAPETUS COMMAND MODULE, JACK KEYES, ASTRORESEARCH

I think we can now safely say there is a problem with the air supply. But it may not have been a pathogen. It is quite possible someone many have brought onboard a chemical. This is more plausible. It would not have to have been created on board. The CIA and the military have both experimented with such things. They seem to be testing them on us now. The command crew now seems to be having hallucinations. They may have been bright enough to bring it on board and release it, but without the

proper training, they did not know how to handle it. They seem to be the most affected by it. Unfortunately, Dr. Norton seemed to have gotten a good dose of it as well.

OCTOBER 19th IAPETUS COMMAND MODULE, ÉMILE NORTON, MISSION SPECIALIST

I have no idea how long we are going to be able to last out here. It getting difficult to get around the spacecraft. It a good thing there is no gravity. I wouldn't be able to walk without stepping on the babies and the puppies.

OCTOBER 20th IAPETUS COMMAND MODULE, RAMÓN LOPEZ, COMMANDING

It is my sad duty to report a mutiny aboard a United States spacecraft. However, it has failed. the ship is now secure. The mission will continue. Sadly, it had also cost the life of Dr. Norton, who was not a part of the rebels. Dr. Keyes's rebellion will go down in the log as a failed attempt to fill the ship with feral cats. I don't know where the orangatang came from. How did they sneak a monkey on board. The mission will continue.

OCTOBER 24th IAPETUS COMMAND MODULE, RAMÓN LOPEZ, COMMANDING

Where id all the green? They never put enough green on space capsules. Plenty of gray, whites, blues and reds. But never enough greens. even all the lights, they are all red. None of them are green. I could have sworn, almost all of them were green once. We're not going to make it, are we? I love green. Maybe the solar system is keeping us prisoner. It doesn't want us talking to the other prisoners. Maybe that is the Firm Paradoxx. maybe it is green.

OCTOBER 31st HOUSTON SPACE CONTROL CENTER

This is Anson Sanderson speaking to you from the control room in Houston with a special news bulletin. The James Webb telescope has seemed to confirm what we all saw last night, the bright flash near Jupiter. The Webb telescope could not find any evidence of the Iapetus spacecraft. NASA fears that the ship may be lo...