

What You Say On The Moon

A One Act Play

by

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CAST: BUZZ, an astronaut  
NEIL, an astronaut  
HOUSTON CONTROL

PLACE: The Lunar Module "Eagle" on the moon.

TIME: July 20, 1969

NOTE: The actors can move in somewhat slow motion to simulate the 1/6 gravity of the moon.

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*Lights up.*

*NEIL and BUZZ are both holding small notebooks and pressing various switches, turning knobs, checking gauges. Their business is routine, having done it hundreds of times in simulations. They speak in "astronautese," professional and precise for they are on the Moon, and that's quite a serious thing.*

BUZZ

So. What are you going to say?

NEIL

SCE to auxilliary.

BUZZ

SCE auxilliary.

NEIL

Cycle the deeder.

BUZZ

Cycling the deeder. Complete.

NEIL

ALS alarm. Stop push button push.

BUZZ

ALS alarm is stop push button push.

NEIL  
LEM Power. Okay, confirm Houston.

BUZZ  
So, is it good?

NEIL  
Yes, confirm Houston.

BUZZ  
No, what you're going to say. Is it good?

*A command look from Neil*

BUZZ  
(into headset)  
Houston, Tranquility, over.

HOUSTON CONTROL  
Go ahead Tranquility, over.

BUZZ  
LEM Power complete. Squeaky clean, over.

HOUSTON CONTROL  
Copy, Tranquility. We have you coming up on CapCom Lunar Satellite Repositioning Standby window. You are go to cycle the LMCom standby relay. Over.

BUZZ  
Copy, Houston. Cycle LMCom standby relay.  
(to Neil)  
Fun, fun, fun.

NEIL  
Houston, this is the LEM Commander. I'd like to run the PMA sequence before initiating the LMCOM SR. Get the main A/B buss up to nine-nine, over.

BUZZ  
(to NEIL)  
Again?

HOUSTON CONTROL  
Uh, copy the PMA sequence, Tranquility. We're showing you well within limit on the powerplant panel, over.

NEIL  
Roger, Houston, just to be safe, over.

BUZZ  
(to Neil)  
We're at nine six. We're good.

HOUSTON CONTROL

Tranquility, Houston. Power says go on the PMA sequence if you want but watch the RCS pressure. Don't want you guys blowing a fuse. Over.

BUZZ

I'd like to look out the window.

NEIL

Roger Houston, go on PMA. Will confirm complete, over.

BUZZ

Don't you want to look out the window?

NEIL

I've seen it.

HOUSTON CONTROL

Roger that, Tranquility.

NEIL

Ok. Initiating PMA. RCS magnetos.

BUZZ

It's the moon out there, you know.

NEIL

RCS magnetos.

BUZZ

(resigned)

RCS magnetos.

*They quickly push buttons, Buzz is unenthusiastic, Neil is all business. The following should be quick, precise.*

NEIL

Push button push  
main panel  
batteries.

BUZZ

Push button push.  
Main panel  
batteries green.

NEIL

Cycle the fuel  
cell breakers. FC  
one.

BUZZ

Cycle FC one.  
Complete.

NEIL

FC two.

BUZZ

FC two. Complete.

NEIL

FC three.

BUZZ

FC three.  
Complete.

NEIL  
Emergency main  
buss a/b standby  
on.

BUZZ  
ER main buss a/b  
standby on.

*Lights in the LEM go out. BUZZ flicks the switch a couple of times. Lights do not come back on.*

BUZZ  
Crap. I knew we should have just looked out the window.

NEIL  
Nine-nine percent on the panel. DC regs normal. You sure you did ER main buss a/b?

BUZZ  
I know how to read the panel, Neil. Geez.

*BUZZ removes a small flashlight and taps it on the overhead panel.*

NEIL  
What are you doing?

BUZZ  
Hold on.

*More taps, the light flickers, then stays on.*

BUZZ  
There we go. Just like my RCA in the basement.

NEIL  
Crosscheck the main a/b buss standby.

BUZZ  
Nine-nine percent. Panel is good. DC normal. Maybe some loose solder. We should be okay.

*NEIL reaches over BUZZ and flicks the switch a few times, the lights change with each switch.*

BUZZ  
It's fine, Neil. Probably loosened on the descent. You don't trust me?

NEIL  
Okay. Confirm Houston.

BUZZ

Houston, Tranquility. PMA complete. We are go for CapCom LSRepo, over.

HOUSTON CONTROL

Roger that, Tranquility. Go for LEM CapCom. Then you have two zero meal period then initiate LEM Enviro sequence. Lunar EVA is still go. Over.

BUZZ

Copy, Houston. Roger two zero meal. Would be nice to take a minute to look out the window while we're here. Over.

HOUSTON CONTROL

Roger that, Tranquility. LEM CapCom standby on mark. See you guys in twenty. Three, two, one. Mark.

BUZZ

Mark. Finally.

*BUZZ stretches his neck and shoulders, rubs his eyes, obviously tired. NEIL extracts two green food packets from a rear panel. He extends one to BUZZ who is now staring out the window.*

BUZZ

These peas taste like glue, don't they?

(opening the packet)

What I wouldn't do for a basket of fries and a chocolate milk shake.

*BUZZ eats and stares out the window. NEIL eats and thumbs through a small binder.*

BUZZ (CONT'D)

Boy. Magnificent desolation. Beautiful. "One minute, it was an Ohio winter."

NEIL

What?

BUZZ

Ray Bradbury. "Rocket Summer?" Read it a zillion times when I was a kid. Got me into flying and now look at me. I am on the moon. You ever read it?

NEIL

No.

BUZZ

Should. I'll get you a copy.

*A pause. Neil reaches over and tries the suspect switch as before.*

BUZZ

It's fine, Neil. Geez.

NEIL

Let's run PMA again. Make sure it was a one time thing. Cross check the main A/B buss. PMA checkpoint two-two. FC three. Okay. FC three. FC three. Buzz? FC three?

BUZZ

We're on meal two zero.

NEIL

I want to run the PMA.

BUZZ

We got nine nine. We're good.

NEIL

Yes, but I still want to run it.

BUZZ

Meal two zero.

*NEIL begins to do the sequence himself, reaching in front of BUZZ to hit some switches and turn knobs.*

BUZZ (CONT'D)

They want us thinking clearly out there. That's what two zero meal is for.

NEIL

I know.

BUZZ

NASA regulations.

NEIL

I'm aware of that.

BUZZ

Are you trying to make me feel guilty?

NEIL

No.

BUZZ

Well, I'm looking out the window.

Okay. NEIL

Okay. BUZZ

Okay. NEIL

Okay. BUZZ

*NEIL continues to hit switches and occasionally gets in BUZZ's way. BUZZ suddenly remembers something he's forgotten, and opens a pouch on his uniform. He removes several small photographs and places them near the window. Neil notices.*

Jane and the girls. BUZZ

You brought a personal item? NEIL

I cleared it with Deke. BUZZ They'll get a kick out this. I'm going to leave 'em on the surface, so every time they...

On the surface? NEIL

I cleared it with Deke. BUZZ It won't interfere with the EVA.

Why wasn't I informed? NEIL

I thought you knew. BUZZ

No. NEIL

You didn't bring anything? BUZZ

No. NEIL

A photograph? Rosary? BUZZ Lock of your kids hair? Anything?

NEIL

No.

BUZZ

Whoo, boy. Well, we can't go back and get something now.

NEIL

I should have been informed.

BUZZ

Did you ask Deke?

NEIL

No.

BUZZ

Well, there you go.

(suddenly realizing)

Darn. Almost forgot. With all the cross-checking...

(reaching underneath control  
panel)

Ah, here it is.

(removing small canister,  
unscrewing the lid)

NEIL

What is that?

BUZZ

Looks like a small chocolate donut.

NEIL

What?

BUZZ

It's Deke's.

NEIL

I'm not following.

BUZZ

Last-minute surface experiment.

NEIL

I'm not following.

BUZZ

Deke wants me to put it on the surface. I'm supposed to give him the coordinates when we get back.

NEIL

Deke stowed an unauthorized chocolate donut on the LM?

**Wonder what happens next?**

For a copy of the full script, email me at:

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Thanks!