

Transcript

Planet Mercury – What inspired and drives you?

MALE:

4, 3, 2, 1 0. All engines running. We have a lift off.

STEFANO ORSINI:

When I was very young, I dreamed to be an astronaut. Space physics allow you to really touch space. Interpret what you see with your instruments really on sight. And it is very different with respect to looking at the telescope which looks at things far away.

KARSTEN SEIFERLIN:

Well, I was 14. And at that time, I thought I wanted to be an astronomer because my parents gave me a telescope the year before for Christmas, and I liked looking at the stars and the planets. And then we went on holiday, and I found an Italian newspaper in a trash can on the beach. Really. And I dugged it out, because there were photographs from the surface of Mars. And I thought, how cool is that. And then on the next page, there was a group picture with, I don't know, 100 scientists and engineers. They all had gray hair. They all looked very boring and unfashionable. And I thought, I want to be one of those guys.

ALAIN DORESSOUDIRAM:

I remembered that when my father was a physics teacher, saying that you look, look, this star, this is very, very far away. In fact, it emitted light 70 years ago. And you are looking the star, and maybe it's now extinct. . But you will know that 70 years after. And for me, it was not the physics or the mathematics that attract at the beginning. It was the part of the dream to imagine how they're, they are.

GO MURIKAMI:

So I was a student in elementary school. I saw, I watched the movie about the math by Arnold Schwarzenegger. In the story, there was some oxygen in the polar ice. And at the time, I didn't believe it. But in the homework of my school, I searched about the math in the book. And yes, there was some statement about such a possibility of oxygen in polar ice. And I was so surprised. And after that, I hoped to do such work. So especially for planets. And so yes, it was my dream. And now I'm, I'd be able to work on that [INAUDIBLE].

INTERVIEWER:

You're living your dream.

GO MURIKAMI:

Yeah.

MALE:

That's one small step for man.

JACK WRIGHT:

When I was young, I wanted to be a space man. And I had a big space encyclopedia like, this thick. That book was filled with facts about Mercury. But how many of those have changed? When I saw the OU advertising this position of geological mapping on the planet Mercury, I thought, this is the best thing ever. And I'm just happy to be able to contribute to the understanding of this small planet.

REBECCA THOMAS:

Well, I started off with archaeology which actually in some ways is very similar to what I do, which is geology. You're just going further back in time. You're going before there were human beings. And the thing is, when I started to look into the geology, I realized that, oh, actually, rocks are great. But rocks in space are even better.

EMMA BUNCE:

And I remember watching Horizons, showing the flyby of Neptune and the first images that were coming back. And I remember just sitting, watching this program and thinking, I want to do this. I wrote to NASA when I was about 14. And as far as I was concerned, I think it was a bit like writing to Father Christmas. I didn't really expect anybody to respond.

But actually they wrote back. And they said, you know, great. You want to work in space, then this is what you need to do. You need to work very hard. You need to study science and math. You need to go to university. And again, I found that quite inspirational, because I didn't expect anyone to write back. And the fact that they wrote back and actually gave me some really good advice and took me seriously, as that being a job that I really wanted to do and sort of set me on my way towards doing the job that I do now.

SIMON LINDSAY:

The problem with astronomy, lovely though it is, is that you can never go there. You can look at Voyager, or Beetlejuice, or whatever, and find out all sorts of wonderful things about it. But there's none of that hands-on sort of thing which you get in planetary science. It's got that sort of almost local feel of we can go there, and we can have a look at it. And yeah, that's fantastic.

ADRIAN MARTINDALE:

I was fascinated by things like Apollo. I may not look it, but it was a little bit before my time. I found that whole thing just to be so inspiring. And it made me want to understand more about the way the solar system works. And I remember from being very small, being so interested in the way they were able to build something that was capable of going to the moon.

DAVID ROTHERY:

I grew up being interested in space, not just planets, variable stars and stuff. And that's vaguely what I want to do. I had visions of being an astronomer. And I went to university and discovered geology which I was much better at than the mathematics that you needed to be a good physicist. So I became a geologist. And then the chance came along to start working on other planets. So I've kind

of gone full circle via the earth. It's great to study the earth. But when you study the Earth, you realize, well, let's do a bit of compare and contrast with these other bodies.

JONATHAN MCAULIFFE:

Most boys and girls, I suppose, are interested in the unknown. I mean, from very young child, everything is an unknown. And as you grew up, less and less in your immediate vicinity becomes unknown. And then we seek to find new unknowns. And with television and movies and sci-fi and Star Trek and all of this stuff that we're exposed to growing up. Space caught me. And it hasn't let me go since.

EMMA BUNCE:

What keeps me passionate about my job is the fact that I have an opportunity which I think is an amazing opportunity to learn things about our solar system before anybody else finds out.

REBECCA THOMAS:

For me, the exciting thing is you get some data and then you try to work out what it means. You actually, you can pull together data from lots and lots of different strands, and suddenly the story emerges. And sometimes that's difficult, because the story that makes lots of sense to you suddenly turns out to be wrong because you get this extra bit of data. But the challenge of that is actually part of the joy of it.

CARSTEN SCHARMBERG:

It's the international work together and making things possible that seems quite difficult. You may remember also the Rosetta mission. I mean, launching a spacecraft here many, many years. It sends through to the space, and then it finds a comet. It's even able to land a lander on-- I mean, that is great. Isn't it? It's a passion for sure.

LOUISE PROCKTER:

I don't know any planetary scientists who can't look up at the moon and wonder, you know, just be amazed by it. And so being able to actually go out and look at some of these planets with a robotic spacecraft is such an incredible fantastic thing to be able to do. And to do it for a living, to be able to do something that you love, and to look at alien worlds for a living, I'm just so lucky I have the best job in the world.