

MAN ON A MISSION

RICHARD GARRIOTT'S ROAD TO THE STARS

A film by
Mike Woolf

83 minutes, Digital, English and Russian w/ English subtitles, color, 2010



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Synopsis

In 2008 Richard Garriott became the first son of an astronaut to go to space. But this is no millionaire's joy ride: he pioneered private space travel to make his dream come true. From his training in Russia to his launch in Kazakhstan to the dramatic, never before seen footage inside the capsule during fiery re-entry, this is a historic moment in human space travel.

Not just for space fans, this is a film that will inspire anyone who works tirelessly to make their dream come true.

Right at the beginning of the documentary we learn that Richard is no millionaire looking for a joy ride. This is a goal he has been working toward since he was diagnosed nearsighted at age 8 and could not qualify as a NASA astronaut like his dad. Owen Garriott was one of the first scientist-astronauts and flew on-board Skylab in the 70's. He is truly a man with the right stuff and is featured prominently in the film. He helps Richard develop science experiments to conduct in space and literally walks him to the rocket that will carry the first son of an astronaut to space.

That liftoff was a lifetime in the making. Richard built his fortune as one of the founding fathers of MMORGs, Massive Multiplayer Online Role-playing Games. From his first game sale in high school to his millions with Ultima Online, he was investing in private space travel. He is a primary funder of the X-Prize and Space Adventures, the only company that can take private citizens to the ISS – Richard is the sixth one to fly to orbit.

More About Richard Garriott's Journey in *Man on a Mission*

Training to fly aboard the Russian Soyuz is much harder than writing a big check – first consider that all the instruments and instructions are in Russian. Most of the training takes place in Star City – Russia's recently declassified cosmonaut training center. Step by step, Richard is our personal guide to the inner workings of the Russian space program. Highlights include centrifuge training, hydro-lab work, water rescue training in the Black Sea and ultimately launching from a remote base in Kazakhstan.

Through Richard's experiences we get a fresh look at the history of the Russian space program. We come to respect their impressive safety record and unheralded number of space-race firsts. Along the way we put ourselves in Richard's space shoes and ask if we would have the guts to go to space. NASA astronauts explain how the Russian Soyuz rocket and re-entry systems work and highlight the immense cost and risks of human space flight.

This becomes strikingly apparent when we learn that the previous two Soyuz capsules had serious problems during re-entry that caused them to enter the atmosphere "ballistically" and land 400+ kilometers off target. Richard's re-entry capsule is already docked on the ISS and will require an unplanned, emergency spacewalk to correct the suspected malfunction. Through exclusive NASA footage, we experience mankind's most dangerous work environment, traveling at 17,500 MPH with the cosmonauts as they wrestle with a faulty bolt. We won't know if the problem has been corrected until Richard returns to Earth.

With all this back-story tucked comfortably in place, it's time for launch – and it is spectacular. On a cloudless day from the steppes of Kazakhstan, family, past astronauts and future space flight customers like Google's Sergey Brin, watch as Richard and crew leave Earth's orbit. As we cut between the rocket and the spectators' reactions, the tension and historical significance are palpable.

The next thing we see is Earth from orbit. It puts all of the time, energy and money into perspective. The view is extraordinary. And the child-like fun we see Richard and crew having in a weightless environment shows us why they think all the work is worth it. After a tense docking with the ISS, Richard gets down to work. He performs science experiments, inspires kids all over the globe via ham radio, puts on an art show, duplicates the same photos his father took from Skylab and finds time to juggle with a crewmate.

It's an intimate, rare perspective of life on board the Space Station. The 10 days go by quickly and then it's time for re-entry. After an emotional goodbye, Richard dons his space suit and turns on his camera to film an exclusive ride back to Earth like no other, including a look out the window during the fiery re-entry as the capsule is in communication blackout. Once safely back on Earth, his father is waiting to greet him, welcoming us all to a new generation of human space exploration.

Many well-known entrepreneurs/explorers who made millions in the technology boom are opening up the business of space to private industry. Richard is leading the way and we were there to see it all. His incredible journey will inspire dreamers and awaken the astronaut in all of us.

Filmmaker Bios

Mike Woolf, Director

Mike Woolf was born in Baltimore but has been smoking briskets and making commercials in Austin since 1994. He spent six years at GSDM Advertising writing ads including the “Wanna Get Away” for Southwest Airlines. In 2000, he started Beef and Pie Productions with renowned photographer/DP Andrew Yates and producer Karen Yates. Four of their short docs – *Growin’ A Beard*, *The 72oz Steak*, *Tuesday Nighter* and *Life is Marbleous* have premiered at SXSW. This is their first feature.

Brady Dial, Executive Producer

Brady Dial has been developing and producing film projects in Austin – and beyond – since 2001. His most recent release is *Ride Around the World*, a film for IMAX® and other giant screen theaters. He led crews from Texas to six foreign countries to reveal the exciting global history of the cowboy. He has developed projects for Discovery, the BBC and PBS, producing *Making the Modern*, a documentary on Japanese architect Tadao Ando’s construction of the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth and *Recapturing Cuba*, a biographical exploration of the art scene in Havana, Cuba.

Andrew Yates, Director of Photography

A South Africa native, Andrew has been an award-winning photographer in Austin for the past 15 years. He started Beef and Pie with Mike Woolf in 2000 and is equally comfortable shooting stills and glorious 4K images on his RED camera. He has fully embraced the digital revolution that has changed the world of film production – not just because he likes buying new cameras but because he understands there are faster, better and less expensive ways to make great images that people will remember.

Catie Cacci, Editor

After receiving her graduate degree from UT in 2003 Catie has been the Senior Editor at Beef and Pie since the day they bought their first copy of FCP. She has cut dozens of commercials, webisodes and long format videos for everyone from Chase Bank to the US Air Force. For the past two years she has been working on this feature in an edit suite the size of Russian Soyuz capsule.

About the Cast

Richard Garriott, Lord British, Gaming Legend, Gentleman Explorer

In October of 2008, Richard Garriott realized a lifelong dream when boarded a Russian Soyuz rocket and launched to the International Space Station, becoming the first second-generation astronaut to travel to space. He is currently chairman of the board of Space Adventures, Ltd. and is a leading expert on private space travel. He made a name for himself as a pioneering and award winning computer game developer. His Ultima series of games is one of the longest running franchises in the history of gaming. His Ultima Online game broke new ground in 1997 by becoming the first commercially successful massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG). Today he is executive vice president and creative director of new gaming startup, Portalarium. More information about Richard can be found at <http://www.RichardGarriott.com>.

Owen Garriott, Retired Astronaut, Research Scientist, Space Visionary

Owen has decades of the right stuff under his belt. He is one of the earliest scientist-astronauts to fly to space, first on the Saturn rocket to Skylab in 1973 and a decade later on the Space Shuttle to Spacelab. After his own historic flights, he continued his scientific career both as an administrator at NASA and at leading engineering firms, supporting US space operations. He now serves as Adjunct Professor in the Laboratory for Structural Biology at the University of Alabama in Huntsville, specializing in the products of extreme environments, including the protein crystal growth experiment executed during Richard's flight.

Other Appearances By:

Sergey Brin, Founder of Google

Stephen Colbert

Anousheh Ansari

Greg Olsen

NASA Astronauts

Mike Finke

Greg Chamitoff

Mike Barratt

Russian Cosmonauts

Yuri Lonchakov

Sergey Volkov

Oleg Kononenko

<http://www.variety.com/review/VE1117946824/>



Wed., Jan. 11, 2012

Man on a Mission: Richard Garriott's Road to the Stars **(Documentary)**

By RONNIE SCHEIB

"Man on a Mission" offers an up-close and personal look at space travel through the somewhat flamboyant persona of computer-game mogul Richard Garriott, looking to follow in his astronaut father's intergalactic footsteps. Disqualified from NASA for nearsightedness, Garriott paid millions to hook up with the Russian Soyuz spacecraft on its journey to the Intl. Space Station, and helmer Mike Woolf records his every step, from months of intensive training at the former Soviet Star City to varied weightless adventures in space, in exhaustive detail. A must-see for stargazers of all ages, the docu debuts Jan. 13 in limited release.

When it became clear that his dreams of being an astronaut like his dad were doomed to failure, high-schooler Garriott turned to virtual adventure, inventing and marketing groundbreaking role-playing games in fantasy universes (the Ultima series). They quickly made him a multimillionaire, and his Ultima alter ego, Lord British, a legend. Indeed, when Garriott finally dons a genuine space suit, it looks like the ultimate role-playing getup.

Garriott invested heavily in private companies engaged in space tourism, which he saw as the future of extraterrestrial exploration. Helmer Woolf includes an excerpt from Comedy Central's "The Colbert Report" with Garriott as the quintessential self-made millionaire, extolling the virtues of private enterprise on- and off-planet.

Aside from a hefty \$30 million pricetag, Garriott's trip to the ISS in the company of two real astronauts -- one Russian, one American -- required him to learn Russian and undergo grueling months of physiological testing and preparation for any contingency, particularly considering the problems that plagued the prior two Soyuz touchdowns. Garriott's father, Owen, is on hand at all earthbound stages of the training, as well as at the Russian command center while his son is in space. Once in orbit, with Garriott manning his own camera, the footage becomes more whimsical; playing with one's food takes on an entirely new dimension.

Though Garriott's piggybacking on the Russian space program is fueled by personal obsession, there is something disturbing about the way this hitchhiker commands centerstage at every phase. He acts as the film's guide to Star City and its history, introduces a timeline of space travel to illustrate the underappreciated contributions of Russian cosmonauts, and supplies running commentary on all his experiences aboard the Soyuz and the ISS. Woolf never really establishes a viewpoint outside that of his unquestioned star; shots of other astronauts' families serve only to highlight Garriott's ringmaster role.

<http://movies.nytimes.com/2012/01/13/movies/man-on-a-mission-with-richard-garriott-review.html?partner=rss&emc=rss>

The New York Times

Blasting Off as a Space Tourist

By NEIL GENZLINGER

Published: January 12, 2012

“Man on a Mission,” the most expensive home movie ever made, is one man’s genial account of his trip into outer space. What’s odd about it is that while you can certainly sense the joy that this fellow, Richard Garriott, feels in achieving a lifelong dream, you’re unlikely to be interested in imitating him. Cramped quarters, bulky wardrobe, unappetizing-looking food: it seems like a Worst Vacation Ever candidate. Mr. Garriott is the son of an astronaut, Owen K. Garriott, who flew two missions for NASA. His hopes of following his father into space were dealt an early setback by bad eyesight; instead he made a fortune as a video-game designer. In 2008 he used \$30 million of that fortune to buy himself a space-tourist seat on a Russian flight. “Man on a Mission” tells the story of that trip.

Because we’ve seen images from space before, the parts of the film that depict Mr. Garriott’s intensive training are more interesting than the flight itself. But he’s a personable host throughout, and the images of his father watching him blast off and return lend the proceedings real poignancy.

A version of this review appeared in print on January 13, 2012, on page C8 of the New York edition.

http://www.avclub.com/articles/richard-garriott-man-on-a-mission,67515/?utm_medium=RSS&utm_campaign=feeds&utm_source=channel_film



Richard Garriott: Man On A Mission

Like many kids, Richard Garriott wanted to be an astronaut. But unlike most, he knew it was more than an abstract dream—his father, Owen K. Garriott, spent two months aboard Skylab in the '70s, and plenty of his parents' friends also worked at NASA. He learned early on that he wouldn't be able to follow in his dad's footsteps, at least not by way of the U.S.

government, because his nearsightedness was an automatic disqualification. *Richard Garriott: Man On A Mission* is a disarmingly enthusiastic documentary about how its subject eventually found his own way into orbit. The film summons up the childlike wonder and optimism inherent in space exploration, while examining how it's opening up to self-funded travelers.

Mike Woolf's doc isn't the first about space tourism—Christian Frei made an improbably tedious 2009 feature (*Space Tourists*) about Iranian-American businesswoman Anousheh Ansari, who flew to the International Space Station in 2006. *Man On A Mission* benefits from being filtered through the viewpoint of Garriott, an unabashed geek for whom space travel has been a lifelong and pragmatically (on relative terms) chased goal. A videogame developer best known for creating the *Ultima* series, Garriott was a role-playing-game pioneer, programming his first effort on an Apple II while still in high school, and selling it himself, with huge success. With his long rattail braids, his homemade sterling-silver snake necklace, and his alter ego of "Lord British," Garriott is an unusual, goofy, unpretentious character who's used the wealth he's had most of his life to do things like explore Antarctica and canoe down the Amazon.

Man On A Mission intertwines Garriott's story with an overview of what a \$30 million Soyuz ticket buys, and what it involves—including months of training in Moscow's Star City, and hours of intensive Russian-language lessons. Woolf compensates for the standard structure with exhilarating footage of Garriott's flight and space-station visit, with its peek at the daily life aboard the cramped quarters with world's greatest view. Garriott's sincere enthusiasm and fan-ish observations ("Thank you, space-Flowbee," he says, when trying out a provided vacuum beard-trimmer) make his trip seem not like a wealthy person's ultimate indulgence, but instead the longed-for, doggedly pursued, and ultimately earned fulfillment of a dream.