



Everyone's Gone to the Moon Podcast

Episode 2: Something in the Air

[Kennedy – Moon Speech, droning music in b/g]

Google July 1969 and what comes up? Over 7 million entries, most of which are related to the first landing on the moon by the crew of Apollo 11.

[Neil Armstrong / Walter Cronkite first step on moon]

On July 20th, 1969, NASA completed President John F. Kennedy's dream of landing a man on the moon and just days later, returned them safely to the Earth.

In that fleeting moment, billions of people on Earth stopped and became one, one people standing in awe at what humans could do if they put their minds to it. But beneath the headline, beneath the technical wizardry that made the event a reality, the Earth seemed to be spinning off its axis...

[War clip]

Wars raged on...

[Protester clip]

...protesters filled the streets, standing in unison demanding equal rights, protection of the environment, ending the war in Vietnam.

[The Stewardesses Trailer / Sugar, Sugar – crossfade to Something in the Air music bed]

It was a month when pop culture was dramatically changing who we were then and who we are now.

July 1969, the month when everyone had gone to the moon. I'm Joe Cuhaj.

Episode 2: Something in the Air

[Music fade]

As the launch of Apollo 11 drew near, during the second week of July 1969, cities and towns across America, and around the world for that matter, were seeing more and more people taking to the streets, becoming citizen activists protesting both for and against any number of issues, with both non-violent and violent protests.

The most prominent movements were those opposing the Vietnam war and those that demanded equal rights for blacks and women.

[Universal Newsreel War Protest Clip]
B/G Mx throughout under]

While most news coverage of the day reported on anti-war protests staged by students and veterans returning from the war, participation in these events ran the gambit of society. On July 8, 1969, the National Coalition of American Nuns was established with a mission to advocate for civil rights, the end to the war, and to push for women's equality in the Catholic church.

Even President Nixon's own church, the Quakers, protested the war holding a silent vigil outside the gates of the White House while five of its members were invited inside to hold meetings to discuss ending the war with Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. The group went as far as to run full page ads in newspapers with big, bold block letters proclaiming, "You Can't Make Peace by Making War."

But it wasn't only the Vietnam war that was igniting global unrest. Around the globe, people were taking to the streets, raising their voices both for and against any number of issues.

One protest from July 1969 actually began the previous month at a small dive of a nightclub in New York City that resulted in a riot that has had rippling effects through the decades, even today. It all happened at the Stonewall Inn near Greenwich Village.

[Gay & Proud Chant]

The Stonewall was literally a dive bar. There was no running water and many times patrons drank from dirty, previously used glasses. The building only had one exit in the event of a fire – the front door, but it was a haven for the gay and lesbian community, an oasis where they could hang out and be themselves.

While homosexuality was legal in New York State in the 1960s, in a sense, the State Liquor Authority declared that bars that served alcohol to gay patrons were "disorderly houses".

Seeing a new market, in 1966, a member of the Genovese crime family, Tony "Fat Tony" Lauria, purchased the Stonewall and made a killing by controlling the money that flowed from the sale of cigarettes, watered down drinks, and the jukebox while at the same time being able to keep the establishment open by bribing New York's 6th Precinct police department with \$1,200 a month to turn a blind eye.

Even though the police were being paid bribe money, they would still regularly raid the Stonewall. Police officers would burst into the bar, turn on the lights, then begin to line up patrons and check their

identification. If a person did not have an ID, if men were dressed in drag, or women did not have on three articles of feminine clothing, they would be arrested.

[Stonewall – What it was about clip]

That is Martin Duberman, author of the book, Stonewall. As he explains, on June 28th, eight policemen entered the bar to harass patrons once again. Some were allowed to step outside while the police and some 200 patrons were forced to wait inside until the paddy wagons arrived.

[Stonewall – The flame is ignited clip]

Before long, angry residents from the neighborhood and passersby saw what was happening. A young woman was handcuffed and led to a police wagon that had just arrived. As an officer led her away, she screamed that the handcuffs were too tight, and with that, the fuse was lit. One patron yelled, “We’ve had enough of the Gestapo!”

Violence broke out. Parking meters were ripped out of the sidewalks and hurled through windows, bricks and bottles were thrown, the Stonewall was set on fire and the people trapped inside had to be extracted by a tactical unit.

The riot finally ended at 4am but for the next four nights, over 1,000 protestors gathered at the site to voice their anger at their treatment by the police. 30 days later, another protest was held in the city, this time a march beginning at New York’s Washington Square. It was the city’s first Gay Rights parade that continues to this day. As a reporter for New York’s Village Voice said, “Gay power has surfaced.”

[WWII, Okinawa Clip]

On the island of Okinawa, which had been under U.S. occupation and administration since the surrender of Japan following World War II, islanders learned that the U.S. was storing deadly nerve gas on the island as well as a large arsenal of nuclear weapons.

[Okinawa newsreel clip]

While President Nixon and Japanese government officials tried to reassure islanders that their safety of utmost importance, protests in both Tokyo and on the Pacific Island erupted with several Japanese protestors being injured by U.S. military personnel.

[Berlin riot audio]

In Germany, over 1,000 riot police fought protestors for three hours along one of West Berlin’s main shopping districts. Fighting broke out after midnight on July 27th in what started as a peaceful protest against the West German government’s policy of extraditing their country’s military deserters out of the city which had become a safe haven for deserters due its demilitarized status.

96 policemen and 25 demonstrators were injured in the clash that saw students bombard policemen with bricks and rocks while officers used truncheons against protestors. One 17 year old girl suffered a fractured skull while a 22 year old man died after having his body thrown through the plate glass window of a new car showroom.

Britain was watching as its empire was slowly losing territory. British colonies such as Kenya, Nigeria, and others wanted to separate themselves from the monarchy and become free and independent countries. In Gibraltar, the British colony on the southern coast of Spain had just seen the arrival of its new governor from Britain...

[Gibraltar new governor audio]

After several offers, on July 4th, Spain's leader, General Franco, tried one more time to persuade the residents of Gibraltar to leave the commonwealth and become part of Spain. A few days after this final attempt was made, over 2,000 Gibraltar residents marched on the new Governor's residence not to show support for the proposal, but to show opposition to it. Marchers carried the Union Jack and held signs that read, "British We Are, British We Stand" and "I'm Ok with the UK."

[Bogside riot sound]

Meanwhile on July 12th in Northern Ireland, during the height of what was known as the Marching Season, violence broke out between Catholics and Protestants in Derry, Belfast, and Dungiven Northern Ireland in what became known as The Troubles. The fighting forced families from their homes. Many were injured or killed when the Royal Ulster Constabulary arrived and attempted to tamp down the violence.

[Battle of Bogside news clip]

The violence in Northern Ireland eventually culminated in August during what became known as the *Battle of Bogside*, a three day riot during an annual march to commemorate the Protestant victory in the Siege of Derry in 1689.

[NASA clip of Apollo 11 preps]

And as protests raged on in the streets in cities around the world, the technicians, engineers, contractors, and the crew of Apollo 11 went about their business, preparing for the greatest voyage humans had ever taken.

The second week of July 1969 saw Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, and Michael Collins making final preparations for their launch on July 16th as they practiced escaping from the massive Saturn V rocket in case of emergency.

[James Burke / BBC escape audio]

That was BBC science reporter James Burke demonstrating one of the astronaut's escape methods from the Saturn V. During this week, the crew practiced jumping into baskets that would send them zooming down a wire some 443 feet to the ground where an armored transport vehicle would whisk them away from the launch pad to an underground bunker 2,200 feet away. Here, the crew would hunker down until it was all clear.

The crew's date with history was about to begin in only a few short days.

[Everyone's Gone to the Moon Theme]

And now, a Footnote to History, additional headlines that floated under the radar and Apollo 11 headlines in July 1969.

The second week of July 1969 had us take one small step in the advancement of telephone technology. It was a small step compared to today's standards. On July 6, 1969, it was announced in the National Star News in Chula Vista, California, that the Pacific Telephone Company would be releasing the new Trimline telephone to customers. The Trimline was first introduced in 1965 and had the dial located on the handheld receiver instead of a separate base. In 1969, the model became more ergonomic and featured a new feature that revolutionized the telephone – the redial button. The phone remembered the last number you dialed and with a push of the button, would recall that number.

And on July 9th, hundreds of hungry rats were driven out of Military Park in Newark, New Jersey by police officers. According to Associated Press reporting, the policemen used shotguns to drive the hoard out, killing 23 in the process. Responding police said that they had to be selective in their targets for fear of shotgun pellets bouncing off sidewalks and wounding passersby.

And also that second week of July 1969, the very first Subaru cars hit American roadways and as well as the airwaves with advertisements introducing Americans to the "Sue-BAR-ew" 360...

[Subaru Ad clip]

[Everyone's Gone to the Moon instrumental up and under]

Accompanying print ads touted the Subaru 360 as being "hot and hairy" and promised picking up "girls, girls, girls" as you sped down the highway at the unheard of speed of 70 mph. The ad also called the car "cheap and ugly" since it only had 2 cylinders and an air-cooled motor. The list price was \$1295.

I'm Joe Cuhaj and thank you for joining me for this edition of Everyone's Gone to the Moon. Thank you to British Pathe News, the BBC, NASA, the Library of Congress, and the National Archives for clips heard in today's episode.

You can learn more about the events and pop-culture that shaped our world in my new book published by Prometheus Books, *Everyone's Gone to the Moon: July 1969, Life on Earth, and the Epic Voyage of Apollo 11*. It's available now at your favorite local bookstore or online retailer.

If you liked this episode, then please share it with a friend. You can view clips from today's episode, learn more about the book, my other titles, and drop me a line by visiting my website, JOE-CUHAI.COM, that's spelled C-U-H-A-J. We'll see you next time.

###

REFERENCES:

1970 Gay Pride March NYC:
<https://youtu.be/OevqwHmeEFI>

Archies: Sugar Sugar
<https://youtu.be/eX28cgKHHyc>

Battle of Bogside:
https://youtu.be/D_ir--dM-lg
<https://youtu.be/vl7iG2G7WNI>

BBC / James Burke Apollo 11 Launch Escape:
<https://youtu.be/pLiAwSKkm6k>

Berlin Extradition Protests:
<https://www.britishpathe.com/video/VLVAA02J3BZT53ZKYU1A0AK94K6YM-GERMANY-WEST-BERLIN-STUDENTS-AND-POLICE-CLASH-OVER-EXTRADITION>

Gibraltar's New Governor:
<https://youtu.be/ODWz7o5vXeE>

Japan / Okinawa Protest:
<https://youtu.be/1rhVKEVQ1Ps>
https://youtu.be/UG_iH0Xyvts

Stonewall / Gay Pride March NYC:
<https://youtu.be/OevqwHmeEFI>

Subaru Ad:
<https://youtu.be/zLPp-NFInXw>

Universal Newsreel / Vietnam Protest:
<https://youtu.be/xVYDmriuA6w>