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Description

NBC's breaking news report on the loss of the Apollo 1 crew--astronauts Gus Grissom, Ed White, and Roger Chaffee--who died in a flash-fire inside the crew capsule during a launch rehearsal.

Keywords

Apollo I, Disaster, Tragedy, Launch Pad, Hatch, Flash-Fire, Crewmembers, Astronauts, Apollo Program, Investigation, Virgil "Gus" Grissom, Ed White, Roger Chaffee, Cape Kennedy, NASA, Mercury Program, Breaking News

Citation

MLA
"Breaking News of the Apollo 1 Tragedy, January 27, 1967." Bill Ryan, correspondent. NBC Nightly
Unidentified Anchor (voice over only):
We interrupt our normal programming in order to bring you this special report from NBC News. Here is Bill Ryan.

BILL RYAN, reporting:
Good evening. Astronauts Virgil Grissom, Edward White, and Roger Chaffee have been killed in a flash fire during a rehearsal of the countdown of the launch of the Apollo flight they were to have made on the 21st of next month. The accident occurred at Cape Kennedy. Here is a report of the event from NASA public affairs officer J. Vaymon at Cape Kennedy, Florida.

JIM VAYMON (NASA Public Affairs Officer): Astronauts Virgil Grissom, Edward White, and Roger Chaffee were killed tonight in a flash fire during the test of Apollo Saturn 204 vehicle at Cape Kennedy Air Force Station. The fire occurred while they were stuck in the spacecraft in the countdown of a simulated flight test. The accident occurred at 6:30 Eastern Standard Time at 10 - minus 10 minutes prior to the craft’s simulated liftoff. The spacecraft is located 218 feet above a launch stand that was dated to the upgraded Saturn 1B vehicles. Hatches on the spacecraft were closed. Emergency crews encountered difficulties removing the hatches. 20 box crew members repeated for smoke and liaison at the Cape Kennedy dispense rate. The crew entered the spacecraft at 3 pm. Minor difficulties had been encountered during the count for environmental control and communication systems. All data has impounded, pending investigation.

RYAN: That was NASA public affairs officer J. Vaymon reporting from Cape Kennedy on the flash fire, which this evening took the lives of astronauts Virgil Grissom, Edward White, and Roger Chaffee. Grissom, 40 years old, was an Air Force lieutenant colonel. He’s in the center here. He had made two space flights, one suborbital in the Mercury program. He suffered a narrow escape at the end of that flight when his Mercury spacecraft sank. He also flew in orbit in one of the two manned Gemini flights. Edward White, 36 years old, on the left, was also an Air Force colonel. He flew a two man mission with James
McDivitt. White was the first United States astronaut to venture into space, leaving his spacecraft for more than 20 minutes for what has been called a spacewalk, from which his fellow astronaut, McDivitt, had to coach him to return. Chaffee, 31, the third man in the Apollo 204 crew, was a Navy lieutenant commander. He had not yet taken part in a space flight. The three men, this afternoon, entered the Apollo spacecraft at approximately 3 o’clock for a full scale rehearsal of the countdown and launch of their February flight. The simulated countdown was 10 minutes from the time of launch when the flash fire hit the spacecraft, its hatches were closed.