



# **#Houston68: Apollo 8 - The Longest Journey (Hashtag Histories)**

*Philip Gibson*

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What if there had been social media during the Apollo 8 mission to the Moon in 1968? This account will put you believably back inside those six tense and dramatic days in 1968. It is the story of the first manned mission to the Moon told in the form of today's social media, allowing us to witness the unfolding drama of the mission as if we were following it in real time and as if the participants and observers were sharing their thoughts and actions with us directly. In December 1968, so much remained unknown. Would the first manned launch of the massive Saturn V rocket lift off and successfully deliver three astronauts into Earth orbit? Would humans be able to survive passing through the Van Allen belts of radiation between the Earth and the Moon? What would happen when the astronauts passed around the far side of the Moon out of contact with Earth? Would the single engine needed to boost the spacecraft out of lunar orbit and on a course back to Earth fire as hoped? Would the first nighttime recovery of a spacecraft from the Pacific Ocean be successful? If the Apollo 8 mission was to be successful, the astronauts on board would become the first humans to travel so incredibly far and so incredibly fast. They would be the first to leave the Earth's sphere of influence and the first to see the whole planet Earth from space. They would be the first to orbit the Moon, first to set eyes on the far side of the Moon and the first humans to witness the spectacular Earthrise over the lunar landscape. The narrative of this account is based on actual astronaut recollections, NASA transcripts of the fascinating continual communications with the astronauts, broadcasts of the main TV networks covering the mission and the thoughts of many laypeople observers. There is an extensive list of major sources at the end of the book.

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