

# What Happened to Astro-E? Script

## Clip from *Building the Coolest X-ray Satellite*

Video

OPEN: PICTURE MONTAGE

Audio

Music

**NARRATOR:** In 1993, scientists and engineers from NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center and ISAS in Japan joined forces. Together they created an advanced x-ray astronomy spacecraft capable of detecting x-rays from some of the most exotic objects in the universe. This powerful research vehicle, called Astro-E would take 7 years to build—seven long years of waiting that culminated in the year 2000 when Astro-E would join two other x-ray observatories in orbit: NASA's Chandra X-ray Observatory and Europe's X-ray Multi-Mirror Mission. While physically located on opposite sides of the Earth, the Japanese and American teams worked closely in pursuit of their shared goal. Together, they developed x-ray spectrometers, x-ray telescopes, and lasting friendships. Their hard work and careful planning culminated on this day - launch day for Astro-E. A day that would bring to each of them the realities of high-risk ventures like space flight

Video

ASTRO-E ROCKET LAUNCH  
FADE TO BLACK  
KEVIN OC  
ROCKET NOZZLE ANIMATION

Audio

KEVIN: It was okay for a while and then what happened was the lining of the rocket nozzle burned through.

Video

CURTIS OC  
ASTRO E LAUNCH VIDEO – SHOWING TWISTED EXHAUST TRAIL

Audio

CURTIS: And the first stage started to cork screw.

Video

KEVIN OC

Audio

KEVIN: The Japanese people started saying, something's wrong

Video

CURTIS OC

Audio

CURTIS: We really don't know what happened to ASTRO-E.

Video

KEVIN OC

Audio

KEVIN: It was seen at the tracking station in Christmas Island in the Pacific Ocean, and there is another tracking station in Brazil that did not ever get a signal from it.

Video

ASTRO E RE-ENTRY ANIMATION

Audio

CURTIS: So we think it's somewhere in the South Pacific.

Video

ILANA OC

Audio

ILANA: We were all down. I remember I couldn't even drive home, I mean, I got a ride home.

Video

KEVIN OC

Audio

KEVIN: We all went out for Karaoke and sang and cried with each other.

Video

CURTIS OC

Audio

CURTIS: It was like a death in the family, here.

Video

KEVIN OC

PICTURES OF ASTRO E TEAM MEMBERS

Audio

KEVIN: You know it was just a bunch of hardware and so what, but then I realized that, it meant that I wasn't going to get to see these people again... maybe for a very long time.