

Thomas Herbrich

# THE TRUTH ABOUT THE MOON LANDING



A picture says more than a thousand words.

*Even if it's all lies?*



Stanley Herbrich (right), NASA Director of Special Tasks. To his left: Wernher von Braun

## *Stanley Herbrich*

Stanley Herbrich spent several years working for Wernher von Braun, the "father of the Moon landing". His unconventional methods were extremely helpful to NASA. He literally "saved" them on several occasions.

The big question (and the mother of all conspiracy theories) is: were the Americans really the first on the Moon, or was it all staged in a studio?

The answer is: BOTH !

My uncle, Stanley Herbrich, was NASA's Director of "Special Tasks". From his estate, I can show you here - for the very first time - what really happened with the first Moon mission.

## *Lift-Off*

Apollo 11 lifted off at midday on July 16, 1969, and Stanley Herbrich was right there at the start.

The Apollo 11 mission was designed to put the first man on the Moon, so people all over the world were glued to their TV sets to catch every single detail. With the press celebrating it as a "glorious moment for mankind", everyone involved in the mission was understandably nervous...





Wernher von Braun

„Oops, Stan, we have a problem!”

(This was later misinterpreted as “Houston, we have a problem!”).

## *The Moon Landing*

Conspiracy theories about the Moon landing have been around for years, and they all come down to one conclusion: it never happened. The Americans didn’t actually land on the Moon.

What nonsense! Of course they landed on the Moon!

And yet Stanley was the unwitting catalyst of these theories. This is what happened: on July 18th, 1969, Wernher von Braun called Stanley: “You know there’s this TV camera on board the shuttle for broadcasting the Moon landing? They forgot the damn cable for it.”

“Stanley, you need to get us pictures of the Moon landing – you have exactly 16 hours time. We’ll broadcast your footage along with the live voice transmission.”





Stanley Herbrich

„You have only 16 hours. But remember, this all has to stay  
absolutely TOP SECRET!!!“

### *Three Scenes*

Stanley was the only person capable of handling such a sensitive project. But he had a very, very tight timeframe – every minute counted, and he had a fair amount to deliver:

- 1. a footprint of the first man on the Moon,*
- 2. the lunar landing module on the Moon,*
- 3. an astronaut standing on the Moon.*

A sheer impossible task, but Stanley had one great advantage: no-one had ever seen any footage of the Moon before. His plan was to make everything a bit grainy, and black and white of course, that would make things easier.



### *The Footprint*

The "footprint of the first man on the Moon" is a very symbolic picture. Wernher von Braun insisted upon having it. Stanley took a rubber boot from his garden shed, got himself lifted into a huge sandpit with a digger, and rammed the boot into the ground.

Et voilà – a picture of the footprint of the first man on the Moon. Due to the secrecy of the project, he told the digger operator that the photos were for a rubber boots commercial.

## *The Lunar Lander*

Herbrich knew the lunar lander, 'Eagle', well from his daily work. Due to the limited time available to him, he had to revert to using household articles for his model: an old pan, some aluminium foil, a couple of tins, and four big spoons.

Up to that point, no-one from the general public had ever seen the real thing. The best idea was, of course, to build everything to a much smaller scale. That was the quickest solution! So Stanley had a sandpit brought to a remote NASA air-house, and in a matter of just a few hours he'd built his moonscape model.







## *The Astronaut*

Stanley's biggest problem was getting hold of an original space suit. It would have appeared somewhat suspicious if he were to make an urgent application for one from NASA's wardrobe just then.

An old beekeeper's overall finally did the trick. This scene was photographed at a children's playground. Stanley successfully got rid of unwanted onlookers by telling them he was after the "killer bees".

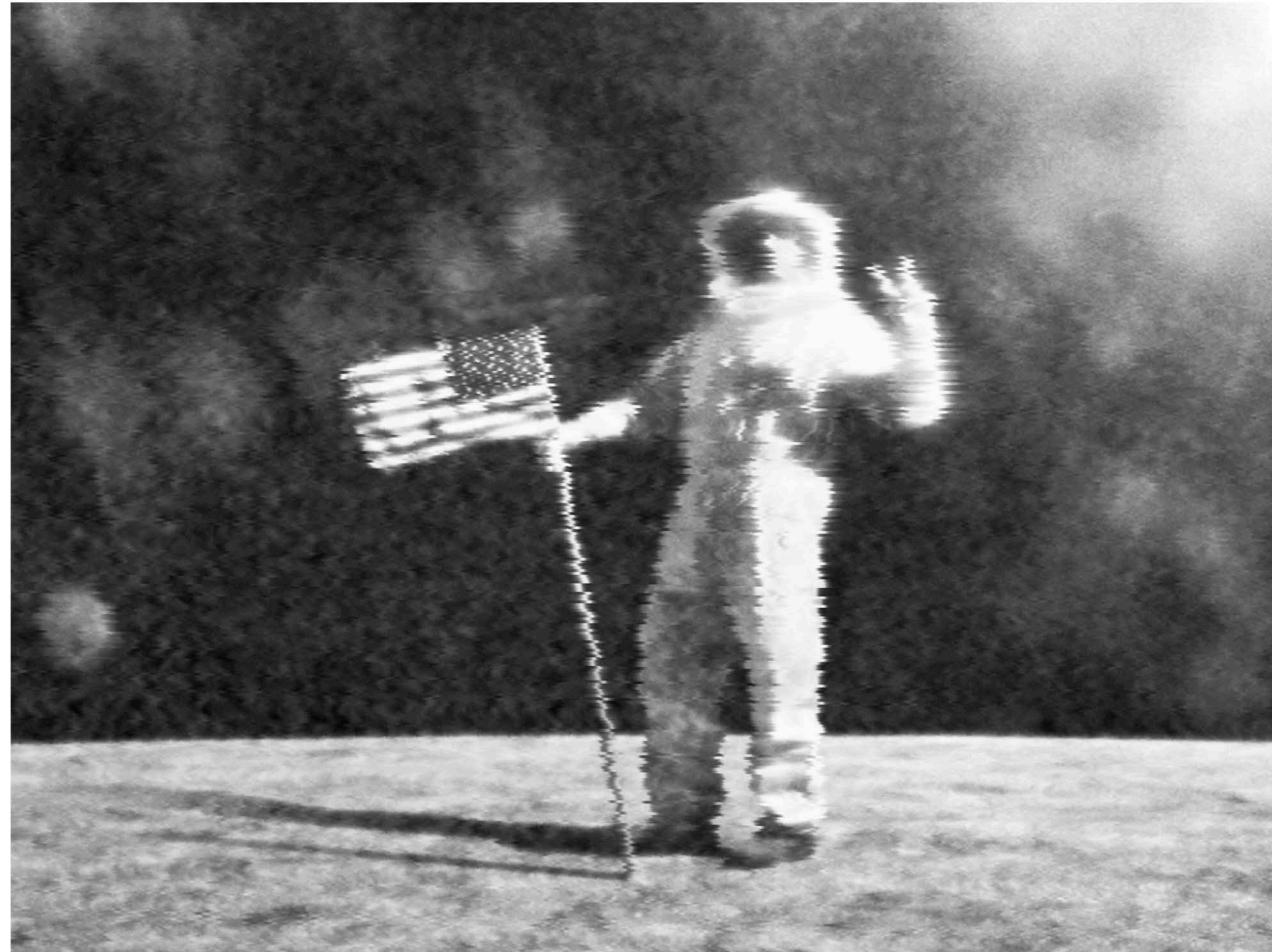
Wernher von Braun also had a deeply symbolic idea for this scene. The astronaut was to ceremoniously hoist the American flag on the Moon – after all, "even Columbus hoisted the Stars & Stripes on Manhattan Island". So Stanley hoisted a flag on his broom, keeping it in place with clothes pegs as there was no wind that day.



## *On Air*

All photos were enlarged and brought to the Mission Control Centre. Stanley took the oldest camera he could find and filmed his Moon pictures. Nice and slowly, with the odd tremble for added authenticity and lots of noise.

The production director called Stan upon receiving the recording and said:  
"Stan, its hard to recognize anything!"  
"Exactly!" replied Stan, "Perfect."



## *The World Is Watching*

Four hours later, they showed live the Moon landing in TV. Never before people had seen such a thing!

You could hardly recognize anything, but with the original sound of radio communication, it did not seem bad.

Half the world was watching a guy in a beekeeper's outfit hoisting the Stars & stripes on a broom!



Was Stanley Herbrich really ever aware of the consequences of this Big Cheat? When it comes down to it, the only thing everyone at NASA was interested in was to keep the mishap of the forgotten cable a secret.

That his work was to later inspire the wildest conspiracy theories was far from Stan's mind at the time. After all, they really did land on the Moon!

## *The MOON LANDING is the mother of all conspiracy theories.*

Did the Americans really land on the moon, or was everything simply staged in a studio somewhere?

In my photo story THE TRUTH ABOUT THE MOON LANDING, I took a long look at the 'truth content' of photographs and people's obsession with conspiracy theories.

*Why does a photo count as proof?*

*Why is this the case even when the story is complete nonsense?*

*Is 'reality' a matter of personal perception?*

*Why do we trust old photos but not pictures used in advertising?*

*Why do we believe in pictures more than in words?*

*Which news sources do we trust?*

*What is the appeal of 'secret knowledge'?*

To illustrate this, I invented a photo story that showed the "secret NASA photos by my uncle Stanley Herbrich". I staged all of these photos using images from my archive, my studio photos and stage props, and public domain photos from NASA archives.

Stanley Herbrich is played by my brother Markus Herbrich. Kathrin Koschitzki was my assistant.

Why did I call my invented uncle 'Stanley'? First, as an homage to my guru, film director Stanley Kubrick. And second, because it paved the way for a pun that was simply too good to pass up on: "Houston we have a problem".

The photo series has already been shown at many festivals and exhibitions, e.g. in Cologne, Bremen, Rome, Vienna, New York, and Paris, attracting over 120,000 visitors to date.

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# THE TRUTH ABOUT THE **MOON LANDING**

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Stanley Herbrich is played by my brother Markus Herbrich

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