



MILLION DOLLAR MOON ROCK HEIST

In July 2002 thieves broke into the Johnson Space Center to steal the Apollo Moon rocks; American National Treasures with huge historical and research value which might have fetched between six and 300 Million dollars on the black market.

Million Dollar Moon Rock Heist is the true story of that robbery; the biggest in NASA's history.

It's the tale of how, Thad Roberts, once a trusted insider at Johnson Space Centre, a member of NASA's elite Co-operative Education Programme, hit upon possibly the strangest get rich quick scheme and didn't care about the consequences.

Roberts, who was undertaking three majors at the University of Utah as well as making his mark at NASA with his astronaut aspirations, was hailed as something of a boy genius by his teachers and contemporaries. But when it came to crime he was no mastermind. Before he'd even stolen the rocks he'd advertised them for sale on the Internet and then found a buyer...the FBI.

In spite of a lengthy stay in Federal prison Roberts still managed to make a virtue of his downfall by telling journalists how the heist was carried out like a special ops raid – with oxygen tanks, looped security camera footage and hi-tech espionage techniques. And it was all done not money but for love. After the break-in he and his girlfriend scattered the moon rocks over a hotel bed and made love on them – making them the first humans to make whoopee on the Moon. Well, that's what HE said.

Among the samples stolen was the famous meteorite **ALH 84001** that might contain fossilised evidence microbiotic life on Mars. All of the loot was eventually recovered, but having been handled was rendered largely useless for scientific research. Also stolen was a set of notebooks describing in minute detail the samples brought back by the Apollo Moonwalkers between 1969 and 1972. These, the life's work of Dr Everett Gibson, the scientist in whose custody the moon rocks rested, have never been found. Gibson's planned book on his research has been forced on hold. Robert's, meantime, has the story that just keeps giving.

Recently the subject of an NY Times best-selling book – Sex On The Moon - and soon to be a movie, Roberts is being hailed in some quarters as a latter-day folk hero. But the book and the film are based on his testimony alone. He's no Robin Hood, say actual witnesses to the event; even those who were closest to him say he's a fantasist and that his versions of the story are way at odds with what really happened. And he certainly didn't steal the lunar samples for love. He'd been planning the job months before he'd even met the girl, around about the same time he was stealing fossils from the University's museum.

This 60 minute special for National Geographic gained **unprecedented** access to secure NASA facilities and revisits the actual locations of the crime to recreate both the real story and the Ocean's 11 type heist in Robert's head. **Million Dollar Moon Rock Heist** features **exclusive** interviews with key characters on both sides of the story including his partner in crime and the people closest to the *real* Thad Roberts. And as the story races along we'll meet the world renowned scientists he betrayed, the unlikely Belgian who proved to be his nemesis and the undercover Special Agents of the FBI who busted Roberts in an extraordinary sting operation.