

RUSTY LUCAS  
P.O. Box 422  
SANDUSKY, OHIO 44871-0422

April 21, 2006

National Aeronautics and Space Administration  
Mail Code AHX  
2101 NASA Parkway  
Houston, TX 77058-3696  
ATTN: Recruiting Department

Dear NASA Recruiter:

I want to be a astronaut. I recently watched the movie *Apollo 14* and the one about the people who go to Mars with Liz Taylor and the guy from *Moonlighting*. Those movies really made me feel proud about our American way of life and I really think we should spread the American way to other planets the same way that Superman did.

I think that it is too bad that we are no longer in competition with the Soviets because that is what really drove our space program in the olden days. We never wanted to be second best, especially to a bunch of communist freedom haters. I was just recently reading about the anniversary of the first Russian cosmonaut in space about a week or two ago. Yuri Gargamel, I think his name was. The article also talked about Sputnik. They beat us putting the first satellite AND the first man into space, which really burned a lot of American egos, but we really socked it to those Russians when we put the first man on the moon and when we beat them in Olympic ice hockey! I wasn't born yet when we landed on the moon, but I am still proud of it after the fact. Those were the days, I'll tell you what.

Don't get me wrong. I do not wish that the Soviet philosophy and regime was still around in full force. I do not miss the everyday threat of nuclear holocaust or terror attacks from the Russians. *Red Dawn* is still one of my favorite movies to this day. I thought for sure that was going to happen to us in Ohio in the 1980's and that I would be forced into gorilla warfare. (That term always confuses me, because I don't think that is how they fought on *Planet of the Apes*). I repeatedly pretended that we had been attacked by Russian paratroopers from the sky and often found myself shouting "WOLVERINES!!!" out in the back yard while playing with my imaginary friends. I got teased a LOT by the die hard Ohio State fans in my neighborhood.

So I am not looking to go back to the days of living in fear of a Soviet missile attack, but I think that we have gotten a little rusty with our national identity since the fall of the Soviet Union, especially in the space program. I think that the only way to get back our edge is to pump some

serious money into a national public relations and recruiting campaign. We can't be afraid of Russia anymore, but we can be afraid of other planets and the beings that live on those planets. You should start to talk up this "Life on Mars" issue. I am not talking about mass hysteria a la *War of the Worlds*, but just putting a general fear of the unknown into people. We have NO IDEA what is out there lying in wait for us, but NASA is looking for people who aren't afraid to go and take a look and fight for truth, justice, and the American way.

Instead of using competition with the Russians to give us the motivation to get out into space and explore, maybe we should stress competing with the aliens who have traveled here to Earth to study us. They have already been here to see us, but we haven't been to their planet yet. We are falling way behind!

I want to join the American space program and become a astronaut. I got good grades in school and I have an adventurous mind. I can begin right away, but I might need the government to subsidize my family expenses if I have to quit my job. I wonder if I could schedule the bulk of my astronaut training here in Ohio. There is a NASA facility fairly close to my home called Plum Brook where I could commute each day. I can then be available to come to Houston for the important sessions that can't be taught in Ohio (and for the graduation ceremony), but I would prefer to do the general training at home.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rusty Lucas". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Rusty Lucas

p.s. In recognition for my commitment to become a astronaut, could you please send me a free NASA baseball cap? I will wear it with pride and salute the American flag every time I see one so that others can see how respectful NASA is to our nation and our flag.