

Far Side Of The Moore

By
Sean Grundy

CHARACTERS

PATRICK MOORE (early 30s)...eccentric amateur astronomer
PAUL JOHNSTONE (mid 30s)...BBC science producer
DR HENRY KING (40s) ...soon-to-be head of the BAA
PERCY WILKINS (60s) ...Moore's mentor
EILEEN WILKINS (early 20s) ...Percy's daughter
ARTHUR C CLARKE (late 30s)...Moore's friend
GERTRUDE MOORE (60s)...Moore's mother
LEONARD MIALL (40s)...BBC Head of Talks

ANNOUNCER; STUDIO FM; TRANSMISSION CONTROL; HENRY KING'S
SECRETARY; NEWS REPORTER; GEORGE ADAMSKI; BAA PRESIDENT

Set in mid-1950s at BBC TV, BAA meeting room and
Patrick's home, East Grinstead.

(Draft 4 - 27/01/15)

SCENE 1.INTRO.

SFX SPACEY FX/MUSIC

ANNOUNCER The following drama is based on the true story of Patrick Moore and the making of 'The Sky At Night'.

PATRICK MOORE (OLDER) All true, even the stuff I exaggerated to jolly up the proceedings. However, I do apologise for my restraint on more colourful opinions: PC-brigade, female producers, Europhiles and all that. Damn irritating.. (FADE)

SFX SPACEY MUSIC - MIX TO - RADIO DIAL
REWINDING BACK IN TIME TO:

SCENE 2.INT. BBC STUDIO. 1957

ARCHIVE (OR MOCK-UP) CYRIL STAPLETON'S PARADE MUSIC PLAYS

PAUL JOHNSTONE ..Countdown to live in 90..Ident, please..

STUDIO FM (ON TALKBACK) Sky At Night.
Programme 1. 24/4/57. 10.30pm.
Transmission, do you have a feed?

TRANSMISSION CONTROL (ON TALKBACK) Hello, studio.
Rolling credits on 'Cyril Stapleton Parade'. I see your slate: (READS)
'Producer, Paul Johnstone. Host, Patrick Meere.'

STUDIO FM (ON TALKBACK) 'Moore'.

TRANSMISSION CONTROL Correction, 'Moore'.

STUDIO FM (ON TALKBACK) Live in 60.

PAUL JOHNSTONE Good luck, studio. Good luck,

Patrick.

PATRICK MOORE (34 yrs) (FROM STUDIO) My entire life depends on what I do in the next fifteen minutes, Paul. ..Longer than it took to create the universe.

PAUL This is slightly more important, Patrick.

PATRICK (FROM STUDIO) In 55 years' time, on the planet Gliese 163c, they'll just be receiving the first ever 'Sky At Night' broadcast. Beta Cassiopeiae are only 45 light years away. They'll already know whether it was a success or not..

PAUL Let's not disappoint our viewers on Beta Cassiopeiae.

PATRICK Of course. Even though they certainly don't pay their television licence.

STUDIO FM (ON TALKBACK) Live in 30..29, 28, 27, 26 (UNDER)

MUSIC "REQUIEM FOR SOPRANO, MEZZO-SOPRANO, 2 MIXED CHOIRS AND ORCHESTRA" - GYÖRGY LIGETI (from '2001')

PATRICK (NARRATION) 'The Sky At Night' all began in earnest - well, anger - in the Summer of '56. Just as Comet Arend-Roland came blustering into our solar system spitting fire and ice, I was also propelling my own elemental energy across the breakfast table..in the form of hot tea.

SCENE 3. INT. THE MOORE HOUSE. 1955.

PATRICK (CHOKING) What the-

GERTRUDE Don't gulp, dear.

SFX SHAKING JOURNAL/NEWSPAPER

PATRICK (SPLUTTERING) I can't breathe.

GERTRUDE Undo your tie.. And please do stop with the amateur dramatics, Patrick..at least until after breakfast.

PATRICK How would you react to this appalling review, mother?

SFX SHUFFLES JOURNAL

GERTRUDE (READS).. *'With his forced visual images and vague generalities, author Patrick Moore is flirting with science. In 'Suns, Myths and Men', this amateur astronomer sows the seeds of irrationality.'* ..Not very glowing.

PATRICK It's an assassination. No, a coup d'etat by one of my own from the British Astronomical Association. It's that serpent, Dr Henry King - my arch enemy.

GERTRUDE Another one?

PATRICK I'll be ruined. Worse, I'll have to return to teaching.

GERTRUDE Does anybody actually read the BAA Journal?

PATRICK Only everyone and anyone in astronomy.. I should thrash the man at tomorrow's meeting. The late

GERTRUDE ..He insists he's with the BBC.

PATRICK Is he sure?

GERTRUDE Are you-.. ?.. He says quite sure and wishes to speak to the author of 'Sun, Myths and Man'.

PATRICK Hell's teeth, mother, it's gone national. The BBC must know about that damn Martian book. I'm doubly ruined. You may have to shoot me twice.

GERTRUDE He's coming to the phone.

PATRICK Look here, Mr Johnstone from the BBC..

PAUL JOHNSTONE (ON PHONE) Is that Patrick Moore - author of 'Sun, Myth and Man'?

PATRICK What's this about?

PAUL (ON PHONE) Congratulations on a terrific read.

PATRICK Trying to soften me up before the beating.

PAUL (ON PHONE) Hah, not at all. I just read it this morning. Long story, but someone left it at my flat - a very well-thumbed copy so they must have enjoyed it too.

PATRICK Did Dr King put you up to this?

PAUL (ON PHONE) I don't know Dr King, but I do know your book is a page-turner.

PATRICK (HUSHED) It's the BBC.

GERTRUDE (HUSHED) That's what I said.

PAUL (ON PHONE) I'm a television producer and I think your book has legs..

PATRICK Legs?

PAUL (ON PHONE) Lots of them. And very fast. Apologies for the strange analogy. It seems to be the buzz word here. Buzz word - that's another.

PATRICK (HUSHED) My book has legs, apparently.

GERTRUDE (HUSHED) How odd.

PAUL (ON PHONE) I'm looking for an astronomer who can talk space science but also, sort of, bring it..

PATRICK (EXCITED) Bring it to life....

PAUL Exactly.

PATRICK ..Enthuse the audience to rise up from their armchairs and explore our vast universe waiting to be discovered like an open box of jewels.

PAUL That's it.

PATRICK Even with binoculars they can find constellations glittering off Sirius; Galilean moons waltzing around Jupiter; a dark and beautiful sea of knowledge that connects us through time to the whirlpool of creation.

PAUL Do you know what, Patrick? I think my search could be over. Have you heard of a chap called George Adamski? (FADE)

PATRICK (VOICE-OVER) The day had gone well. Good fortune from the ashes..

PATRICK He's invited me to talk on the television..

GERTRUDE Wonderful. The cats are also excited..

GERTRUDE/PATRICK (PERFORM) VERDI'S 'QUESTA O QUELLA'

PATRICK (VOICE-OVER) Verdi's 'Questa o Quella' was a fitting song to celebrate with. I accompanied on the piano...We're very close - mother and I. Home-schooled me on account of my dicky ticker ... gave me my first book on astronomy. Father was never interested. I was the wrong son for a WW1-hero who couldn't understand why his only child wanted to spend his days in books and his nights looking at the stars. Some arm-chair psychologist will probably read something painfully meaningful in all that: 'our father who art in heaven' etc.. That serpent Dr Henry King reminds me a little of father: athletic, strong, patronising. I'm sure you irritating armchair psychologists will set great store by that too. If you do, keep it to yourself..

SCENE 4. INT. BAA MEETING.

ARTHUR I would like to draw your attention

to the recent sighting of Arend-Roland..

PATRICK

(VOICE-OVER) I didn't take a stick to the BAA meeting - but I kept my broolly handy. My scientist friend, Arthur Clarke, was there. Clever chap. Invented geo-synchronous satellites. You may recognise the name from his science fiction writing. He adds a 'C' to sound more fanciful. Perhaps that's the kind of thing one does coming from Minehead.

PATRICK

I concur, Arthur. I caught sight of the new comet at 2.03am..

EILEEN WILKINS

Father and I managed this rudimentary drawing.

SFX

RUSTLE OF LARGE SHEET OF PAPER

PERCY

Admittedly, it was very hazy.

EILEEN

And cold.

PATRICK

(VOICE-OVER) Percy Wilkins and his daughter, Eileen, were also present. Correction: his 'beautiful daughter'.

HENRY KING

Rudimentary indeed.

PATRICK

(VOICE-OVER) I suppose I should mention the fact that HE was there..

HENRY KING

Did anyone capture a more professional representation..?

PATRICK

(VOICE-OVER)..even the very mention of his name turns my stomach, yes, the serpent Henry King.

HENRY KING

..Not just 'amateur' renderings?

PATRICK I would advise the association that the word 'amateur' is at the core of the BAA's ethos. Some members should consider whether their own approach is best served here.

PERCY It's quite all right, Patrick. There's no need to-

PATRICK And on that note I would like to draw everyone's attention to a literary review in this month's Journal..

GROANS OF BAA MEMBERS

HENRY KING Is this really the time and place, Mr President?

PATRICK ...in which Dr King posits that my latest book is (READS) '*flirting with science*' and '*sowing the seeds of irrationality*'.

PRESIDENT Please, Mr Moore..

PATRICK I realise I haven't spent eight years labouring over my book but that does not mean it has less value scientifically than his door-stopper 'The History of the Telescope'.

HENRY KING It took ten. How long did your book take? A year?

PATRICK Alas, I am forced to write at 5000 words per day to make a living since I don't have the luxury of a public funded university lectureship.

HENRY KING 5000 words a day..? I'm sure the facts find it difficult to keep up.

PATRICK (HUSHED) Bloody serpent.

EILEEN Is that true, Pat?

PATRICK (LOUD) Most certainly is true.
(HUSHED) It was nice to wipe the smile from the serpent.

EILEEN (HUSHED) Very entertaining.

ARTHUR Come on, old man, we might just make the 10.30 and pick up some beers on the way..

EILEEN Bye, Patrick.

PATRICK Yes, lovely to- Toodle-oo, Eileen.

STUDIO FM (ETHEREAL) Live in 25, 24, 23
(UNDER)

SFX STRANGE BEEPING (SPUTNIK 1 RADIO TRANSMISSION).

SCENE 5. INT. BBCBAR.

JOHNSTONE The chap who wrote this will be riveting in the Talk show but there's so much more potential.

MIALL I'm not sure, Paul. Isn't it all old men with long white beards? ..Same again?

JOHNSTONE This on you or the department?

MIALL Don't be silly. ..Same again, Charlie. Stick it on the Talks tab ..Look, astronomy's millions of miles up there. I.E. Not very televisual.

SFX TURNING BOOK PAGES

MIALL This him on the back cover?

PAUL Yes.

MIALL A monocle? How ancient is he?

PAUL 33. He's worn it since he was 16.
Yes, he's a little eccentric.

MIALL Hm.. Read this.

SFX PAMPHLET THROWN ONTO TABLE

PAUL 'Frankie Looks Up'..?

MIALL When Helen said you wanted to pitch an astronomy series I remembered Percy Lamp sent me this.. That new producer. Friend of Frankie Howerd.

PAUL (READS) 'Join the country's favourite comedian explore space with his assistant, 'blonde bombshell' Sabrina'

MIALL 42-17-36.

PAUL 42-17-really?

MIALL Frankie and saucy Sabrina actually pitched it to chairman Jacobs himself.

PAUL The DG?

MIALL Over dinner at Claridges; with Alma Coogan singing the theme: "Frankie's Big Telescope".

PAUL (CHUCKLES) You're joking..(LAUGH DIES AWAY) Oh, you're not..Please say he didn't go for it.

they exist?' with George Adamski.

ARTHUR Ah...You know, he claims to have taken flights with aliens to the Moon.

PATRICK I'm to be the voice of reason.

ARTHUR Well, these opportunities don't orbit too often.

PATRICK (BEAT) Eileen seemed impressed.
..I've grown very fond of her.
Reminds me a little of Lorna..

ARTHUR Careful, old man, you'll be hitting the gin.

PATRICK Do you think Eileen would make a good wife?

ARTHUR I don't feel qualified to answer.

PATRICK But you were married.

ARTHUR For 2 months. Ghastly idea. I understand things of a celestial nature but I'm at sea with more 'earthly' concerns. Anyway, writing and marriage are incompatible. And perhaps me and women.. I've always suspected you to be the same way.

PATRICK (BEAT) It's a Bomber's Moon tonight.
I can see Mare Nectaris.

ARTHUR Britain is so regressive. I'm thinking of moving to Ceylon. They're much more 'existential'. And the scuba diving is superb.

PATRICK I hear the skies over East Asia offer brilliant views.

ARTHUR I'm hoping to buy a 6" reflector with the advance from 'Earthlight'.

PATRICK What's that one?

ARTHUR Aliens inhabiting Earth during the Paleolithic period.

PATRICK That will sell terrifically well in the current UFO craze.

ARTHUR What about you? What's 'Charles Allingham' got on the boil?

PATRICK 'Cedric'.

ARTHUR Yes, 'Cedric'..

PATRICK I..I mean 'Cedric' is steering clear of Flying Saucer novels for the mo. Too risky with King circling. If he discovered I wrote spoof alien books under a pseudonym he'd (YAWNS) run me out of town.

ARTHUR Hence the reservations about the BBC. Sticky.

SFX OPENS ANOTHER BEER.

ARTHUR ..Luna is extraordinarily clear tonight..Oh, you asleep? (BEAT) (INTONED) I always thought Lorna was a fiction.. Lorna, Luna..

MUSIC "THE BLUE DANUBE - JOHANN STRAUSS II

PATRICK (VOICE-OVER) It was a Bomber's Moon the night I met Lorna - my first love. Saw me looking through binoculars during an air raid..

SCENE 7. EXT. STREET. NIGHT

SFX (DISTANT) AIR RAID SIREN.BOMBING.

LORNA Are you mad?

PATRICK No, Patrick, actually.

LORNA (CHUCKLES) You really should find your way to a shelter.

PATRICK And waste this view?

LORNA Are you a Peeping Tom?

PATRICK God forbid - unless that includes the man in the moon.

LORNA ..A star-gazer.

PATRICK And who do I have the pleasure?

LORNA I won't tell you until you get to safety..

PATRICK (VOICE-OVER) Lorna, Luna..

SFX (UNDER) STRANGE BEEPING (SPUTNIK 1 RADIO TRANSMISSION).

STUDIO FM (ETHEREAL) Live in 20 seconds..

SCENE 8. INT. BBC OFFICE. DAY

SFX KNOCK, KNOCK

PAUL You wanted a chat.

MIALL Have you seen this review about your monocle?..Moore takes quite a beating.

PAUL You checking up on me?

they were dentures..Lost the real ones in Bomber Command.. Is that important?

MIALL I suppose dentures are okay.. The resolution is very low on these cameras ..but an amateur. The Director General won't like it: an amateur representing astronomy at the BBC.. It looks cheap..

PAUL It doesn't matter anyway. He's turned us down.

MIALL Turned us down!?

PAUL He called this morning. Something about a spat with another BAA member.. Probably why this landed on your desk..

MIALL Ruddy cheek.. Well, good riddance.

SFX (UNDER) STRANGE BEEPING (SPUTNIK 1 RADIO TRANSMISSION).

STUDIO FM *(ETHEREAL) Live in 15 seconds..*

SCENE 9. INT. PATRICK'S OBSERVATORY.
DAY

MUSIC (DISTANT) ROSSINI'S 'UNA VOCE POCO FA'

BBC NEWS ANNOUNCER (ON RADIO SPEAKER) ..And many American politicians have interpreted Mr Khrushchev comment 'We will bury you' as a nuclear threat.

PATRICK (HUFFING)

hated it. I read in the 'Radio Times', one must wear ten layers of make-up just to be seen.

PATRICK Did I do the right thing?
Television would have been jolly useful, especially when the writing dries up..

GERTRUDE Your writing is super.

PATRICK What - 'Flying Saucer from Mars'?

GERTRUDE Oh, everyone's writing silly Martian books.

PATRICK But one masquerading as true facts..? It's curtains if Henry King discovers 'Cedric Allingham'.
..King will be there tonight. Maybe I shouldn't go.

GERTRUDE Will Eileen?

PATRICK Percy drags her everywhere, poor thing.

GERTRUDE You've known each such a long time.

PATRICK 10 years. I knew Lorna barely 10 months..

GERTRUDE So sad. I know it broke your heart dear.. And then your father going.

PATRICK The only good German is a dead German.

GERTRUDE The past hurts.. Eileen could help you think about the future.

PATRICK She won't be interested in any future with me when King's finished.

GERTRUDE Oh, you're in one of your black moods.

SFX (DISTANT) CAR HORN

GERTRUDE Oo, I think it's a Morris Minor..

PATRICK .. Lorna and I even named our children..

MUSIC (DISTANT) ROSSINI'S 'UNA VOCE POCO FA'

GERTRUDE I like this part..(SINGS ALONG)
(UNDER) Ma se mi toccano / Dov'è il mi ode bole..

SFX (UNDER) STRANGE BEEPING (SPUTNIK 1 RADIO TRANSMISSION).

STUDIO FM (ETHEREAL) Live in 12 seconds..

SCENE 10. INT. OUTSIDE. NIGHT

LORNA Beautiful 'Sirius'.. Which ones 'Orion'?

PATRICK Just move the telescope slightly.. See the three stars..

LORNA Lovely 'Orion'.. So you were saying..?

PATRICK Oh yes. My mother's to blame. I was 6.

LORNA 6?

PATRICK She saw me constantly staring into the sky; so handed me G.F. Chambers' 'The Story Of The Solar System'. To be honest, I think I was watching the other children play in the

street - hoping to know their names.. Very solitary childhood..

LORNA Poor darling..

PATRICK ..Looked up and learnt the names of the stars instead.

LORNA And our next child?

PATRICK 'Nova'.. See by the North Star.

LORNA Such darlings: 'Sirius' 'Orion' and 'Nova'...Our children will never be lonely..

SFX (UNDER) STRANGE BEEPING (SPUTNIK 1 RADIO TRANSMISSION).

SCENE 11. INT. MEETING ROOM. NIGHT

PATRICK Thus by extrapolating the 18% vision offered in libration I made speculative drawings that already have interested the American rocket programme; so one day we may discover the truth about the far side of the moon.

SFX SMALL AUDIENCE CLAPPING

ARTHUR (APPROACHES) Splendid talk, Patrick.

PERCY Wonderful.

EILEEN Your drawings are marvellous.

PATRICK The British Interplanetary Society are more forgiving than the BAA.

ARTHUR He's coming over.

PATRICK I spotted his snakelike eyes.

KING Ah, the television man.

PAUL Wasn't that a fantastic talk?
Please tell him to reconsider..

KING Reconsider?

PAUL That Patrick is the TV astronomer
the BBC are looking for.. to be at
the forefront of space science
communication.

KING I wouldn't know about that. (MOVES
OFF)

ARTHUR That poured cold water on him.

PERCY Well done.

EILEEN Yes.

PATRICK ..I suppose you want me to agree to
your Flying Saucer programme now.

PAUL That's not why I..But don't let me
stop you..

ARTHUR We'll leave you chaps to talk
business.

PAUL Good to meet.

SFX FEET MOVE OFF

PAUL Look, I know you feel it's a gamble,
but I promise you that it will be
serious.

EILEEN/PERCY (APPEARS) (DISTANT) Goodnight
Patrick.

PATRICK Goodnight, Percy. Night, Eileen.

EILEEN (DISTANT) Wonderful presentation.

on how your performance in the flying Saucers programme is received and secondly, on your not deciding to go to ITA in the meantime.'

SFX TYPING

PATRICK (READS) 'Dear Paul, I will do nothing about this until the New Year. How did the UFO programme go down?'

PATRICK (VOICE-OVER) Perhaps it was a little white lie about the ITA knocking on my door..

PAUL (READS) 'Dear Patrick, The programme seems to have gone down much better than we expected. I will telephone next week with the final decision.'

PATRICK ..But little did I know that even more Machiavellian machinations were at play behind the scenes..

SCENE 14.INT. KING'S HOME. DAY

SFX BUZZER

MIALL Henry King? Never heard of him.. Okay, put him through.. ..Mr King.

KING (ON PHONE) Dr.

MIALL Oh, Right. Leonard Mall, Head of Talks.

KING (ON PHONE) I wish to discuss Patrick Moore's contribution to your Flying Saucer programme.

MIALL Rather good wasn't he.

KING (ON PHONE) Patrick is a colleague at the British Astronomical Association. Nice chap but you do realise, he's a hobbyist?

MIALL It's come to my attention.

KING (ON PHONE) I would have expected the BBC to have invited a professional scientist to talk.

MIALL Isn't astronomy full of amateurs?

KING (ON PHONE) Every discipline needs its foot-soldiers; but are they really the people to lead the campaign? I, myself, studied at Cambridge, PhD in Astrophysics..
(FADE)

SCENE 15.INT. PATRICK'S HOUSE. DAY

SFX PHONE RING

GERTRUDE Well, pick it up.

PATRICK It could be a 'no'.

GERTRUDE You'll only find out by answering.

PATRICK I don't want to hear a 'no'.

GERTRUDE (PICKS UPS) East Grinstead 13753..
Oh, yes, he is.

PATRICK I don't-..Er, hello..

EILEEN (ON PHONE) Patrick.

PATRICK Eileen?

EILEEN (ON PHONE) Please could you come over. Father is in a terrible

EILEEN I'm sorry, Patrick.

PATRICK It's I who should be sorry. King hates me so much, he's attacking my dearest friends.

EILEEN There's something else.

PATRICK What?

EILEEN King invited me for coffee..under the pretext of promoting father's book but he just wanted to know.. if the rumour was true that you were really 'Cedric Allingham' author of 'Flying Saucers From Mars - The Facts'...

PATRICK Oh no.

EILEEN I insisted it was just a silly rumour.

PATRICK Darling, sweet, Eileen, I am completely in your debt. ..Right, telephone..

PATRICK (VOICE-OVER) The least I could do was give the serpent a piece of my mind..But that's the thing about serpents: slippery beasts..

KING (ON PHONE) I will not retract a single word about Percy's book.

PATRICK It's wrong, King, and you know it.

KING (ON PHONE) If amateurs don't like the rigour of critical analysis; they should not write.

PATRICK These are a personal attacks to inflate your own ego.

KING (ON PHONE) If anyone is seeking to inflate their own ego, it's you, Moore, with your lust for fame - despite it coming to nothing. Incidentally, it may interest you, I have just been appointed Director of the new London Planetarium.

SFX SLAMS DOWN PHONE

PATRICK Would you mind if I just pop outside, Eileen?

EILEEN Of course not.

SFX OPENS/ SHUTS DOOR.

PATRICK (DISTANT) Aaaagh..

SFX OPENS/ SHUTS DOOR.

PATRICK Sorry about that.

EILEEN No, it's admirable of you to confront King. Father hates battling.

PATRICK You're such a good egg, Eileen, caring for him. He's very lucky. I wish I could have shared astronomy with my father.

EILEEN Poor Patrick.

PATRICK You know, his death and..

EILEEN Lorna's..

PATRICK Yes..sent me into a bit of a spiral.

EILEEN Did you lose them both in the war?

PATRICK German bomb took Lorna. Same mob

that took my father but with gas in 1917.. Just took him 30 years to go. Sorry, I shouldn't dwell.

EILEEN But you're jolly fine now.

PATRICK Yes, the stars saved me. They always do.

EILEEN Astronomy's like a religion to you and father. I think I am losing heart with it all. Seeing how father's been so ill-treated by the BAA. It's all very insecure.

PATRICK You know, Eileen, I could bring you some security.. especially if I am in the employ of the BBC.

EILEEN But television seems such a fickle business.

PATRICK And there's my writing.

EILEEN But what if Henry King discovers 'Cedric Allingham'? ..Dear Patrick, there's something I should tell you.

PATRICK What?

EILEEN I've..I've been courting a chap .. Bertie Coombs. We began seeing each other whilst you were busy with your television thing.

PATRICK ..Oh.

EILEEN He's very nice..A diplomat with the British Embassy in Tehran. A very quiet part of the Middle-East and hot.. (FADE)

SCENE 17.INT. TRAIN CARRIAGE. DAY

PATRICK (VOICE-OVER) For some reason I was in a fugg making my way back to East Grinstead. It was cold, damp and foggy - typical London sky. Not a star visible. Just the kind of miserable night I hate; alone with my thoughts..

SFX TRAIN ON TRACKS..BECOMES ECHO-EY.

SFX (UNDER) STRANGE BEEPING (SPUTNIK 1 RADIO TRANSMISSION).

LORNA (ETHEREAL) Patrick..

PATRICK Lorna.

LORNA (ETHEREAL) Don't give up, my darling.

PATRICK I'm not the person I thought I was.

LORNA (ETHEREAL) I believe in you.

PATRICK But this is just a dream, my love. To be perfectly rational about this - you don't exist anymore.

LORNA (ETHEREAL) I am always with you.. And so are 'Orion', 'Nova' and 'Sirius'..

PATRICK That's nice. Completely irrational..But nice.. Like all my dreams..

SCENE 18.INT. PATRICK'S HOME. DAY

SFX DOOR OPENS

PATRICK (SIGHS) Home mother.. Two hours to go thirty miles..

GERTRUDE Oh Patrick, look, a telegram..

SFX RUSTLE OF TELEGRAM

PATRICK (READS) 'You have been accepted for a television series. Please come to the BBC, as soon as possible, tomorrow. Paul Johnstone'.

GERTRUDE Isn't it wonderful. We should celebrate.

MUSIC GERTRUDE & PATRICK PLAY
'NESSUMDORMA'

STUDIO FM *(ETHEREAL) Live in 9, 8, 7..*

SCENE 19.INT. BBC. DAY

PAUL They've agreed three 15-minute programmes, one a month - then take it from there, depending on viewers.

PATRICK It's a start.

PAUL Leonard, my boss, has suggested "the perfect name" - 'Star Map'.. And "the perfect title music" 'You Are My Lucky Star'.

PATRICK Sounds hateful. I never listen to anything composed later than 1848.

PAUL How does 25 guineas per episode sound?

PATRICK Sounds much better.

PAUL The first broadcast is 24th April; we could cover the forthcoming lunar eclipse.

PATRICK (EXCITED) The 24th? Paul..the serendipity of it all. The brand new Comet Arend-Roland will be visible throughout April and the Earth will pass through the comet's orbit on the night of the 24th. It will be the best comet visible to the naked eye since Halley in 1910.

PAUL A new comet to usher in a new astronomy programme!

PATRICK It's a sign - if I believed in such things.

STUDIO FM (ETHEREAL) Live in 6, 5, 4..

PATRICK (VOICE-OVER) Obviously I was keen to share the news with everyone..

SFX DIALLING

SECRETARY London Planeterium..

PATRICK Could I speak to Dr King?

SECRETARY I'll just see if he's in. Who should I say is calling?

PATRICK Patrick Moore.

SECRETARY One moment.(PAUSE) ..I'm afraid Dr King is in a meeting. Could I pass on a contact?

PATRICK Of course, West London 783456: BBC Lime Grove studios, where I'm preparing my new astronomy television programme..

SCENE 20.INT. BBC OFFICES. DAY

PATRICK (VOICE-OVER) Paul and I busily

prepared - under Leonard Miall's
doubting gaze - as we put together
our team..

NANCY THOMAS (SHOUTS) Where's the presenter?

PATRICK (VOICE-OVER) Fiery director, Nancy
Thomas called the shots. Yes, a
woman. Only at the BBC..

SKAT ERITKSON Where's my moon drawing? It was on
my desk last night..

PATRICK (VOICE-OVER) Dane designer, Skat
Eritkson made the props.. liked a
tipple more than me.. Only at the
BBC.

SFX CHINK OF BOTTLES/GLASSES

PATRICK (VOICE-OVER) And wry Viennese
cartoonist, Alfred Wurmser drew the
pictures while his massive Alsatian
dog, Till kept guard..

SFX BIG DOG WOOF

PATRICK Which side were you on in the war,
Alfred?.

PATRICK (VOICE-OVER) ..An array of
eccentrics hiding out.. Only at the
BBC.. I felt right at home... Oh,
can't forget one of my most
enjoyable preparations..

MUSIC PIANO MUSIC FOR DANCING

WOMAN'S VOICE One, and two and three and hold..

PATRICK (VOICE-OVER) Ah, yes, Linda Hotchkin
& The Silhouettes. I was invited to
help choreograph 12 lovely dancers
- dressed in tight black costumes -

not me, I might add, thank goodness;
as they carried the stars and
planets against a black backdrop.
The Milky Way never moved so
delightfully..

PATRICK (VOICE-OVER) But the production
wasn't without its hiccups..

SFX DOOR BURSTS OPEN

MIALL What the hell is this, Johnstone?

SFX MAGAZINE SLAPPED ONTO TABLE

PAUL The Radio Times..

MIALL Between Cyril Stapleton's Parade,
and the 10.45 News..

PAUL An advert for Tyne Brand Stuffed
Pork Rolls..I like them..

SFX RUSTLING PAPER

MIALL That.

PAUL Our programme..Looks good; they've
even supplied a star chart.

MIALL They've got the wrong title.

PAUL No, they haven't.

MIALL What the hell?

PAUL Patrick didn't like the title music
either. I suggested Holst's 'The
Planets' but he said the composer
was inspired by the planets'
astrological characteristics not
astronomy.

MIALL What is it then?

PAUL Not sure. Head of Music was going to call when he had some inspiration.

MIALL But the programme is tonight!

SFX DOOR BURSTS OPEN

NANCY THOMAS Moore has only done one rehearsal, plus he talks too fast and ignores the script.

MIALL If the director can't control him, Johnstone, I'll have to have a word. Where is he?

PAUL On the BBC roof with the Director-General and his grandchildren..observing the new comet.

SFX STRANGE BEEPING (SPUTNIK 1 RADIO TRANSMISSION).

SCENE 21.INT. BBC STUDIO. NIGHT

NANCY THOMAS He's still not here ..thirty minutes to tx.

PATRICK (ON TALKBACK) Hello, everyone.

PAUL There, see.

NANCY THOMAS At last, Patrick.

PATRICK (ON TALKBACK) Absolutely wonderful sky tonight. You can clearly see Arend-Roland..

PAUL Any thoughts on music..?

PATRICK (ON TALKBACK) To be honest, the night air offered no inspiration.

Looks like old Gustav and his
supernatural mumbo-jumbo.

SFX TELEPHONE

PAUL (ANSWERS) Hello..Really? ..Right.
I'm on it.

SFX PUTS DOWN PHONE

PAUL Carter from Music - what about
Siblius's 'Pelleas et Melisande'.

PATRICK (ON TALKBACK) Of course. Brilliant.

PAUL How long have I got?

NANCY THOMAS Live in 25 minutes. Send an
assistant.

PAUL There's no time.

SFX FEET RUNNING

PATRICK (VOICE-OVER) Poor Johnstone ran
through the rabbit-warren of Lime
Grove to the music library..

SFX RATTLE GATES

PATRICK (VOICE-OVER) Only to find it was
locked.. Well, it was after 5 and
the BBC bar was open. He had to
track down a security chap..find
the right key.. run back..

SFX FEET RUNNING AND KEYS JANGLE

PATRICK (VOICE-OVER) ..Sift through hundreds
of records, run back the studio, put
the record on..

MUSIC 'BLUE SUEDE SHOES' BY ELVIS PRESLEY

PATRICK (VOICE-OVER) ..to find that someone had put the wrong record in the sleeve. So off he went again ..

NANCY THOMAS Two minutes to tx. Where the hell is my music?

SFX FEET. DOOR BURSTS OPEN

PAUL (BREATHLESS) Here.

PATRICK (ON TALKBACK) Well done, old man.

NANCY THOMAS Give it to the sound engineer.

STUDIO FM (ON TALKBACK) Starting the clock.

NANCY THOMAS No time to check it..Fingers crossed your new programme isn't heralded with 'Jailhouse Rock'..

PATRICK (ON TALKBACK) Can anyone hear a buzzing?

NANCY THOMAS Check that, sound.

PAUL Maybe dispense with the monocle for this, Patrick.. Bit old-fashioned.

PATRICK Of course. ..My entire life depends on what I do during the next fifteen minutes.

STUDIO FM ..3, 2 and cue..

NANCY THOMAS Camera 1 on title card..Cue music..

PATRICK (VOICE-OVER) As the words 'The Sky at Night' appear, a stylus is lowered..

MUSIC 'AT THE CASTLE GATE' THEME MUSIC PLAYS

PATRICK (VOICE-OVER) Perfect.

NANCY THOMAS Ready camera 3. Cue Patrick.

PATRICK Good evening. Astronomy is not just a hobby for white haired old gentlemen with beards and in these monthly programmes we hope to show you what you can actually see in the night sky each month.

NANCY Looking good..Very natural...

PAUL ..and no script..

PATRICK (UNDER) Tonight, is a momentous evening because Comet Arend-Roland is actually visible to the naked eye..(GULP. SWALLOWS) it-it-it will not return for thousands of years, so this is your only chance to see it.

NANCY What was that?

PAUL I think it was a fly.. I think it buzzed straight into his mouth..

NANCY He's just swallowed a fly in front of a million viewers..

PATRICK (UNDER) It's travelling fast enough to escape our solar system entirely.
(FADE)

SCENE 22.INT. BBC BAR.DAY.

PATRICK (LAUGHS) I know. It buzzed all the damn way down.

PAUL (LAUGHS) Bad for you, but so much worse for the fly.

MIALL I'm sure the viewers will have enjoyed that.

PATRICK I hope I shan't be expected to perform it on every show?

MIALL We'll see what the weekly review say?

THEY LAUGH

PATRICK What's that?

PAUL I go into a room with my peers to discuss the future of our programme while giving me a good hiding.

PATRICK Sounds like a BAA meeting.

MIALL The hiding's just for fun. Your future isn't decided by the weekly review.

PATRICK The viewers?

MIALL Don't be silly - the BBC doesn't let the public decide what's good for them. It's all down to that chap there.

PAUL The DG.

MIALL He's looking. Raise your glasses to the man who pays our wages.

SFX CHINK OF GLASSES

PAUL That's the first time he's acknowledged me.

MIALL I spoke to him briefly on the way here. Especially taken to you, Moore. Although he wondered why no letters appeared after your name.

PATRICK I don't need them, dear boy.

MIALL I had to manoeuvre him around the issue of an amateur leading our new science programme.

PATRICK Amateurs have always led the way in hands-on astronomy but I can give him Henry King's number. He's spoilt for letters.

PAUL Dear god, no.

MIALL DG also wanted to know what's the plan for next month? Another comet?

PATRICK Unfortunately, celestial showstoppers are only every 40 years.

MIALL Pity...Well, the nod is we're good for a few more programmes. Being cheap and uncontroversial helps..

PAUL I'll put that on my headstone.

MIALL But he said the public's enthusiasm for astronomy may wane after 6 episodes.

PATRICK I thought the public didn't matter.

MIALL Whoever told you that?

PATRICK But if the audiences went up, we could continue?

PAUL We just need a tiny miracle..

MIALL ..One a month.

PATRICK (VOICE-OVER) Paul and I gave it our best shot.. All singing and

dancing..especially Linda Hotchkin &
The Silhouettes..

WOMAN'S VOICE

One, and two and three and four..

PATRICK

(VOICE-OVER) I called on dear
friends Percy Wilkins and Arthur C.
Clarke to talk about their work. I
even featured the new London
Planetarium and it's experts - all
except the new Director. The snub
was felt through the world of
astronomy. ..Oh for small
pleasures.. Alas, as anticipated,
the audiences fell away.. Not
dramatically, but 'The Adventures of
Robin Hood' on the enemy's side
obviously had more allure.. Perhaps
I should have considered those
tights..?

SFX

BEEPING OF SPUTNIK 1 TRANSMISSION.

**SCENE 23.INT. PATRICK'S OBSERVATORY.
NIGHT.**

BBC ANNOUNCER

(DISTANT) (UNDER) ..At 9 o'clock,
in 'Russia, the Atom and the US',
Professor George Kennan considers
the relationship between the two
superpowers.

GERTRUDE

Anything exciting?

PATRICK

Something earlier.. Like a falling
star but unusually constant..

GERTRUDE

..Last programme tomorrow?

PATRICK

Eileen was right: fickle business.

GERTRUDE

How is she?

admitted it was theirs.

PATRICK Mother..A miracle!

GERTRUDE Oh good.. Is it?

SFX PHONE RINGS.

PATRICK (ANSWERS) Paul?

PAUL Yes.

PATRICK Guessed it might be.

PAUL You've heard?

PATRICK Yes and you've had the same thought..

PAUL If the Russians can launch a rocket into space..

PATRICK ..They can also put a put a nuclear warhead on it.

PAUL The world is now a much scarier place.

PATRICK What a stroke of luck.

PAUL Miall wants you to come in..

PATRICK When?

PAUL Immediately. The news is going crazy, but nobody here understands space ...except Patrick Moore.

SFX MOTORBIKE

PATRICK (VOICE-OVER) I grabbed a tie, jumped on 'Vesuvius' and sped to London. Along the way, I felt so sure of success, I posted a copy of

SFX

(UNDER) STRANGE BEEPING (SPUTNIK 1
RADIO TRANSMISSION).

PATRICK (VOICE-OVER) On the planet Gliese 163c, they'll just receiving the first ever 'Sky At Night' broadcast in the year 2015..

SFX

ALIEN SPEECH

PATRICK Where am I?

LORNA Gliese 163c, I think.

PATRICK Do they like me here?

LORNA Of course.

PATRICK This isn't real, is it?

LORNA Don't be silly, darling.

PATRICK ..Where are we going?

LORNA Back to Earth.

PATRICK ..Like Arthur's '2001'..at the speed of light..

PATRICK (ARCHIVE)..Grab a pair of binos, go outside, and learn your way around the sky.

PATRICK More broadcasts?

LORNA I suppose so.

PATRICK (ARCHIVE)..I'm only a four-dimensional creature. Haven't got a clue how to visualise infinity. Even Einstein hadn't. I know because I asked him..

PATRICK So 'The Sky At Night' carried on a

little longer..

LORNA Oh yes.. 55 years.

PATRICK Heck, that's astonishing.

LORNA The longest ever running science programme ever.

PATRICK Run by an amateur..

PATRICK (ARCHIVE)..If a flying saucer landed in my garden and a green man came out, I'd offer him a tea or coffee and try to get him straight into the television studio...

PATRICK Ah, terra firma.

LORNA 9th of December 2012.

PATRICK (OLD) (DISTANT) (DIFFICULT BREATHING)

PATRICK My last day?

LORNA Don't worry.

PATRICK Are they my family?

LORNA (VOICE-OVER) Three children who lost their own fathers. You became their surrogate father: Ian, Christopher and Adam. They're middle-aged now but you brought some normality to their lives..In turn, they gave you a family..our family..

PATRICK 'Orion', 'Nova' and 'Sirius'.

LORNA Yes.

PATRICK (ARCHIVE)..At my age I do what Mark Twain did. I get my daily paper, look at the obituaries page and if

I'm not there I carry on as usual..

PATRICK

Was a television programme the sum total of my achievements? ..I suppose that's the best an amateur can expect.

LORNA

My love, there are incredible leaps made every day in astronomy because you inspired so many children to look to the sky. ..A generation of scientists are standing on your shoulders.

PATRICK

That's good. ..It's an old suit anyway.

PATRICK

(ARCHIVE)..I may be accused of being a dinosaur, but I would remind you that dinosaurs ruled the Earth for a very long time.

THE END