

NASA JOHNSON SPACE CENTER ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

EDITED ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPT 11

SHANNON W. LUCID
INTERVIEWED BY JENNIFER ROSS-NAZZAL
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ROSS-NAZZAL: Today is September 2nd, 2021. This interview with Shannon Lucid is being conducted in Houston, Texas, for the JSC Oral History Project. The interviewer is Jennifer Ross-Nazzal. Let's talk about Mir. You faced all these challenges as a woman. When you were selected, you thought you were going to be flying a lot, and then you blew everybody out of the water with all these records and ended up getting this medal from President [William J.] Clinton and Boris Yeltsin. I think you had a lot of determination over your lifetime, and it paid off in spades for this mission.

LUCID: Many many times after I came back, and of course I had to go do all these talks, a lot of people would say, "Oh my goodness, you're so special. You got chosen for this wonderful special mission."

I said, "Whoa, whoa, whoa, just wait a minute. The reason I got to fly on this mission is because no one else would do it, and I wanted to. Let's just be honest about it." It worked out so great, but it wasn't because I was special or because there was a big meeting about who would be the best person for this. I was just asked because there wasn't anybody else. I was the bottom of the barrel. That's not being modest; that's being truthful, just looking at things as they were.

ROSS-NAZZAL: I think Sally [K. Ride] gets a lot of attention for being the first, and some of the other women get attention for their accomplishments, but by the time you flew the first time and

your other missions, you didn't really garner that same attention. Originally you did get attention because people were saying you were going to be the first mom in space.

LUCID: No. Anna [L. Fisher] was the first mom in space.

ROSS-NAZZAL: When you were selected in '78. But the attention and the accolades came when you flew on this mission.

LUCID: It was much better that it worked out that way because it would have been harder earlier on in life. I always feel sorry for little gymnasts who get a gold medal when they're 16.

ROSS-NAZZAL: Oh yes, how do you overcome that?

LUCID: Yes. It's good just to be able to live life and keep going on and on rather than have your major accomplishment occur when you're eight years old and you win the World Chess Championship or something. Because for so many people, it feels like it's all downhill from there. I was just very fortunate.

ROSS-NAZZAL: Last time we got up to STS-76 and your son Michael going on his trip. What are your memories of approaching Mir for the first time? What do you remember feeling and seeing at that point?

LUCID: Oh, I was just so excited because here we were, one of the first Shuttle flights that was actually going somewhere. We lifted off from Earth, and we were headed someplace. Granted, it wasn't the Moon, and granted, it wasn't Mars. But if it couldn't be to Mars and the Moon, Mir was a good third choice. It was just really neat to be headed to someplace where I was going to live, at that point I thought for four months. It was just very exciting.

ROSS-NAZZAL: Did you have a sense of how large Mir was before you got there? Or were you surprised by what you saw?

LUCID: Mir was not large. When Ellen [S.] Baker, my friend, flew on the Shuttle and they went up to get Norm [Norman E. Thagard] and bring him back, as soon as she landed back at the Cape [Canaveral, Florida] she called me up. She said, "Shannon, don't go; it'd be just like living in a mine shaft." There was a lot of stuff that had accumulated on Mir over the years, so that was just her impression. We just laughed.

ROSS-NAZZAL: That's funny. Did you have a role in the rendezvous and docking?

LUCID: No. I really didn't because I had just showed up two weeks before we launched. It worked really well because I had launched many times before, so I didn't need very much Shuttle training whatsoever for this flight. I knew what to do, whatever I needed to do.

ROSS-NAZZAL: Do you have any distinct memories of opening the hatch and seeing Yuri [I. Onufriyenko] and Yury [Usachev]? Were there any ceremonies or celebrations?

LUCID: Yes, we opened the hatch up, and then Kevin [P. Chilton] of course—he was the commander—and Yuri, they hugged each other. After the Shuttle crew finished hugging, then I floated over and I said, “Hi, here I am.” They were very excited. We didn’t really know each other very much at all. Yury Usachev and Yuri Onufriyenko, they said, “Come, we’ll show you where you’re going to stay.” They had gone to great efforts; they found my bag of personal stuff that I believe STS-74 had brought up. They had Velcroed it to the wall, and then Yuri said, “And look, we even found a mirror for you.” They put it on the wall. It was like a round mirror that you have in a scientific instrument of some sort; it was highly polished. They were just very welcoming.

As soon as I went in—and no one had ever said anything, but I figured okay, now I’m a Mir crewmember. The Shuttle, they can go do whatever they’re doing, but I was a Mir crewmember. I basically just lived over there on Mir. I ate all my meals with them. From that point on I became a Mir crewmember.

Before I launched, I wanted to make sure that I had some way of communicating with them, because my Russian wasn’t great. The one thing that I made sure I had on the Shuttle was an English-Russian dictionary, and the first thing I did when I got over to Mir was stick it up right above the table where we had all of our social stuff and eating. I thought it was just real interesting because I had this vision: “Okay, so we’ll be gathered around, and I’ll be quickly going through the dictionary to say what I want to say.”

Later it dawned on me. It was up there the whole flight. I only took it down one time. That was one evening when we were having a discussion. It had to do with the Orthodox Church and what Russians believed. We were having this big conversation. I was trying to get a point

across, and they were trying to get a point across. It was obvious we didn't have the right word, so we tried to find it, and we didn't. So I put it up. It was just useless.

What happened that first day when I got over there—I started talking to them, and they were so nice. They didn't put their hands on their ears and say, "Shannon, Shannon, we can't stand to listen to you anymore." They acted like they knew what I was saying.

After a little bit I started making some jokes, and they actually laughed. As soon as they laughed, I knew that we were home free, because I do like to talk. They didn't tell me to be quiet. I like to laugh, and they laughed. From then on, I never had another worry about communicating in Russian.

It was interesting because many times I'd be talking, and I didn't have a world-class vocabulary, but that didn't stop me. Russian has a lot of cognates. If I didn't know the Russian word I wanted to say, I would just take the English word, and I'd put a Russian ending on it. They would look at me with this puzzled look and say, "What are you saying?"

I'd said, "Haven't you guys ever studied Russian?"

ROSS-NAZZAL: Can you give an example of a Russian ending?

LUCID: Oh, all the typical Russian endings. You just turn an English word into a Russian word and just make it sound Russian. Then they started using a lot of the words that I used for things. When the exchange crew came up Yuri Onufriyenko handed a sheet of paper he had written a lot of these words down on to Valeri [Korzun] and said, "Here, these are a lot of words Shannon uses so you might want to study them."

ROSS-NAZZAL: That's funny.

LUCID: Yes, it was. It was pretty funny.

ROSS-NAZZAL: That's great that you took up that dictionary, and you only consulted it one time.

LUCID: Yes. Then when it dawned on me, I thought, "Wow!" It wasn't because I had a high level of Russian. First of all, I'm not particularly concerned about being absolutely correct in anything. When Shani took Russian in college, because she had to take a foreign language, I said, "Oh, take Russian, because NASA is going to be working with Russia and you might be able to have something to do with it."

Before the flight, when my family came over to Star City at Christmas to visit, I took them into Moscow, and of course we were walking around and talking to all the shopkeepers. When we got back, and walked in the apartment, Shani says, "Mom, do you know that you don't use any of the correct endings when you talk to people?"

I said, "Okay. What difference does it make? Didn't we get everything we wanted and go everywhere we wanted?"

Shani said, "But I was just so embarrassed listening to you."

I said, "Well, we accomplished what we wanted to do."

My point was I was never too particular. It was the main thing that needed to get across, not absolutely correct grammar, because you'll never get anywhere if that was your goal. But then Yury Usachev had a real good ability—I think it's called restorative something—so I would sort of say something and he was able to in his mind figure out what I was saying. He was really

good at that. A lot of times if Yuri Onufriyenko was telling me to do something, and I wasn't positively responding within a microsecond then Yury would say, "This is what he's really trying to say." A lot of times we'd get talking and if we weren't connecting, Yury Usachev was really good about backing up and starting over in a slightly different tack. It all just worked out. The moral of the story is you don't need dictionaries—they're highly overrated unless you want a 100 in a language class.

ROSS-NAZZAL: I'm sure Webster's would be happy to put that on the back of their latest version of their dictionary. Do you have any memories of STS-76 and docking and leaving?

LUCID: Yes. We watched them undock. Then they undocked, and they left. We sat down and celebrated and ate a grapefruit that had come up on a Progress. Actually, I felt just a little sorry for the 76 crew because they were headed back to Earth, and here I was getting to stay in space. It was just like I had the good deal, and they were going back. We watched them for a long, long time, just a receding star in the distance as they left. I was thinking about what they were doing in the Shuttle, and here we were sitting around eating grapefruit and getting into a rhythm of living in space.

ROSS-NAZZAL: What were your first few days like on board Mir? Did you have to acclimate in any way?

LUCID: No, our days were pretty much the same in a lot of respects. The ground always woke us up at a certain time, and then we got dressed, and we always ate breakfast together, and then

we had a daily schedule that they sent up every night. Actually, we looked at it as permission, that we had permission to do those things that day, because the ground didn't really know when you could do things or when you couldn't. Then we just went about and did what we needed to do. We ate lunch, did what we needed to do in the afternoon, and then we ate supper together, and went to bed.

ROSS-NAZZAL: You were supposed to be doing experiments in the Priroda module. What did you do until that arrived?

LUCID: It was a little long, because Priroda wasn't there, but I'd hang out with Yuri and Yury and help them do whatever they were doing and make myself useful in whatever way that I could find.

ROSS-NAZZAL: I caught an interesting interview online and one of the interviewers, somebody from PAO [Public Affairs Office], asked you about your favorite tool in space, and you said it was the screwdriver, because you used it a lot on Mir, and that you used to use gray tape, which I assume was duct tape.

LUCID: Duct tape.

ROSS-NAZZAL: You said you used it like a million times. What were you using the screwdriver for and duct tape? What was your role in helping to maintain Mir?

LUCID: I had a fanny pack. If you look at the pictures you see I always had it on. It had all the things I needed to survive. I had a flashlight, I had my scissors, I had a screwdriver. I don't know what else, but those were the basic things. Oh, and maybe a pen. I kept a notebook down in the front of my coverall that I wore, because when you're in space you spend a lot of time looking for stuff. Those things, I needed to know where they were so that I could use them immediately. I didn't have time to look for them. The screwdriver I just used all the time, to unscrew this, and screw this back in.

You mentioned duct tape. On the Shuttle you used a ton of duct tape. You just were always duct taping this and that to keep stuff located on the walls and what have you. I wanted to make sure I had duct tape on Mir, and so somebody was nice enough, they had taken a lot of duct tape and rolled it around like a tongue depressor so I had some.

But to my amazement, I found that on Mir I did not use duct tape like I did on the Shuttle. Because a lot of Mir was Velcro walls, so you could just stick stuff up. Also the Russians had put a lot of restraint straps all over Mir, and they were flat and you could put things there and it kept them in place. Whereas on the Shuttle if they had anything, they were sort of like round bungee cords and they didn't really work as well as the flat ones. When I came home, I said, "Hey, along the middeck lockers you just need to put these kind of cords like the Russians have, and it would make life so much simpler on the Shuttle." But no one wanted to hear about improvements from Mir.

ROSS-NAZZAL: Wearing that fanny pack, was that something that you had learned flying on board the Shuttle? I'm trying to think if I've seen pictures of you wearing a fanny pack.

LUCID: Yes. I think I might have been the first person to ever use one. It just seemed to me that it would be the perfect thing because you'd keep your little personal possessions that you needed right there. Then I think other people started to use them a lot because it was just a great innovation. It was my personal equipment, and I had ordered one from one of the places that sell them.

ROSS-NAZZAL: How did you prepare to receive Priroda when it finally came up? Were there activities that you had to do before you could accept it and become part of the Mir?

LUCID: Yes, but it wasn't all that much. Priroda launched and then the ground told us there'd been a fire inside Priroda, so they weren't just really sure what kind of condition it would be in when it got there. I don't remember exactly what happened, but it was approaching, and Yuri Onufriyenko, he had the TORU; it was sort of like a skeleton of a robot. They had set that up and this is how they were monitoring the approach, so he was busy with that. Then he got concerned about the approach. I was looking out the window, and Yury Usachev was looking out the window to take pictures. Then Yuri Onufriyenko, he just shouted out, "Korabl!" That's Russian for vehicle.

I said, "Oh yes, I see it. It's out there." Then he said no, and then he pointed, and then finally it dawned on me after the third or fourth time, oh, he wants me to get in the Soyuz. I went and did that. Yury Usachev kept taking some pictures. But at that point he was concerned that there'd be an impact with Priroda to Mir. But that was just sort of funny. "Oh yes, I see it. It's exciting."

ROSS-NAZZAL: Did you have to activate that module? What was your responsibility in doing that? What did you find when you opened it?

LUCID: They were very concerned about what the fire had done or what the atmosphere would be like in there. We had these little tubes we put on the outside and then you watch the color change and it tells you the condition of atmosphere in there. It was a while. We didn't get to open Priroda immediately. But after a while then they said, "Okay, it can be opened."

We opened the hatch and oh my goodness, it was this metal maze. All these Tinkertoys, these metal rods, they were all connected back and forth. There was no way you could have even gone through, so they all had to be taken out.

Then they had batteries. Priroda didn't have solar cells on the outside for electricity, it had batteries, and they had all these submarine batteries. That's where the fire had been. We had to get them all out. Yuri and Yury, they started working. It was a Russian thing. It was their job, and they were supposed to do it. I was just hanging out watching. I said, "Oh, I'll help you; I'll help you guys." "Oh, no, no, no, no," they said because I was the guest, and they had to make it all right and nice.

I just sort of hung out. I had my handy-dandy screwdriver and I would start helping, and then they needed an extra pair of hands here, and before you knew it, we had a rhythm built up and we were just doing really good, taking all that; we were all working together. It was sort of a joke. I'd try to undo those bolts that were holding these metal rods in, and some of them I couldn't move, so then I would just say we needed a strong Ukrainian male to come and get those off, and they would laugh. Yuri Onufriyenko then would work on that one and get it all

done. It took us a while. Then we had to bag up all the batteries and get them out. We had to go and store everything.

But what was really nice was when we had Priroda all done. We could get in and start doing what we needed to do in there because we had all the support structure and the batteries out. The ground was amazed, and they said, “Oh, you got done so much quicker than we thought.” Yuri Onufriyenko told the ground, “Well, but that’s because Shannon helped us so much.” Bill [William H.] Gerstenmaier later told me that up to that point there was just this hesitancy between the Russian ground controllers and the few Americans that were there. But he said after Yuri Onufriyenko had said that then it was like it dissolved a wall, and then all of a sudden everybody was just one team and were all working together.

ROSS-NAZZAL: How long did it take you to get the vehicle activated?

LUCID: We got it all cleaned out, and then we had to gradually bring the experiments online. It was really interesting because they had some Russian instructions on how I was supposed to hook up the experiments—because I was hooking the American things up. Of course I’d never done it before. I’d never seen it on the ground.

I would look and I would think hmm, because I didn’t have a clue, because the Russian flight data file was very different from ours. It goes in the opposite direction, and it just wasn’t the same. I had all these Russian instructions, and what was I going to do? So I would just sit there and I’d look at these wires and I’d look at this, and I thought hmm, now what would be the logical way of hooking this up? If I were a Russian, how would I hook this up because Russians and Americans think a little bit different on things. After I figured out how I thought it would

hook up, then I could look at the instructions and say if I did this oh yes, I think this is what it's saying. That's how I got everything connected.

A lot of the connectors had sort of like little paper around it, and so I took it off and cut it off and got it to all hook up. One day I'd been in and out of Priroda a fair amount. It always seemed like I heard some bees buzzing in there, real low-level. I went to Yuri, and I said, "Come in here and listen." He came in there, and he listened. He said, "Yes, there's something there." We started looking behind the panels to see, and it turned out that it was a fire alarm that was going off. Then we figured out it was because of all the little paper that had been cut off, there was all these little particles floating around, and so they set off a fire alarm, but it was at so low a level you couldn't tell what it was. So that was sort of funny.

ROSS-NAZZAL: Did any experiments get damaged because of the fire?

LUCID: No, it's just amazing everything worked really well. All the American experiments worked so well. They really did.

ROSS-NAZZAL: You had mentioned last time when we were chatting, but I think I had turned off the recorder by then, you were talking about the importance of Bill Gerstenmaier in terms of the experiments.

LUCID: Oh yes. I said everything worked so well, but the reason everything worked so well was because Bill Gerstenmaier was on the ground. I think he'd even brought in the experiments that were the ground-based ones. Before he sent anything up—and what he did, this wasn't for the

activation of Priroda, but for the experiments. He took and he made procedures for everything I was to do in nice English and he sent them up before it was time for me to do it. He had gone through them to verify them there on the ground. Bill Gerstenmaier was why everything worked so well. Without his support nothing would have worked well.

If there were questions or when I was going to start something new, he would contact the PI [principal investigator] of that experiment. It was the middle of the night over here in the States, but he had them on the radio link so that if I had a question he could immediately ask them. He just really really did an outstanding job. He gets all the credit for getting the experiments to work right.

ROSS-NAZZAL: How did you communicate with Gerstenmaier? I'm thinking back to your article, that once an hour you would gather with the crew and talk to Mission Control. But were you on a different line with Bill?

LUCID: Oh, no. That was all the Russians. Americans, they bought, supposedly, 10 minutes a day; so, for 10 minutes a day in the evening if we were over a ground site and if there wasn't anything else more important to do, I could talk to Bill or Gaylen [S. Johnson]. That was generally who I talked with. For six months the only English I heard was whenever I talked during the American time slot.

It was so funny, and I have to go back and think, but anyway the U.S. was activating a com site on the eastern seaboard. So, any time that we saw that we were going over there and there was going to be a time that we could talk, then Yuri and Yury would say, "Okay, Shannon,

you get on the headset,” because they knew that we wouldn’t hear anything except static. It was so funny.

There was not continuous coverage on Mir, and it was only when we flew over one of the Russian ground sites. So some days, depending on our orbit, we would talk, maybe once every 90 minutes or so. Then there were a few really marvelous days when we didn’t have any coverage, and we went all day without talking to anybody, and those were very efficient days when we could get a lot done. Every night the Russians sent up the com schedule for the next day so you knew what times that you’d be flying over.

ROSS-NAZZAL: When you say they sent them up, on Shuttle you had that teleprinter. Were you getting them with something similar? Or was it over e-mail? How did that function?

LUCID: Oh, no, look, we didn’t have e-mail. That’s modern days on Station. No. They sent them up and it came out, it looked like a little tape that you get your receipts from in the—

ROSS-NAZZAL: Oh, like a register receipt?

LUCID: Yes, like a little register tape. It was like that that they sent up. They had a few bigger sheets. But most of it was just like this little register receipt. There was a picture when Claudie [Haigneré] was on there. She’s holding up the day’s instruction. It just goes on and on and on. Yuri would always just stick it up close to the command central, the times when we would have com, and the daily schedule. It was a Form 24. We got it every night.

ROSS-NAZZAL: In your article you said that Mir was a laboratory that hurtles around the Earth at 17,000 miles an hour. You had worked in labs for years before you came to NASA. How was it different working on board Mir from a ground laboratory? Were there certain similarities, or was it quite different?

LUCID: Except for the obvious fact that you were floating around and you had to think about the equipment floating around, basically what you were doing was the same. You had the experiment that you were going to do, and you were going to carry it out. The nice thing, what I thought made it really interesting, was I was able to innovate a little bit. Like, for instance, when we had the candle experiment, they had wanted pictures taken at certain points. The camera wouldn't take the pictures because it was too low a level, the light from the candle flames. So I drew the pictures out. The processes in your mind and the emotional feel of it was like you were working in a lab. You had the same mindset of thinking, "Oh, what am I going to find out today that I didn't know."

ROSS-NAZZAL: Yes, I was curious about that. Did you have windows in that lab?

LUCID: No.

ROSS-NAZZAL: You had also said when you came back that you couldn't have picked better people to go up with in space. You enjoyed every day, you enjoyed working together, and joking around together. I wondered what did you attribute that to? The fact that this seemed to

be almost like for lack of a better term the perfect crew, that you came together, you worked together quite well and nicely, that things just fit like it was puzzle piece.

LUCID: Yes. We were just a very, very good fit. That's what I attribute it to. I was very, very fortunate. I think Yuri and Yury thought that they were fortunate too. You know how it is. If you have a group of people some just jell and some don't jell that well, and you have to work harder at it. It wasn't planned that way. If that's what you were getting at. There was no plan.

There was no plan—who would work good with who. It just happened that the three of our personalities meshed very well together. Yuri and Yury were very considerate of each other and of me. They had confidence in each other. We liked to laugh a lot. Yury Usachev and I would always sort of make fun of Yuri Onufriyenko because he was so young. He was younger than we were, and he was Ukrainian.

ROSS-NAZZAL: I was just curious about that.

LUCID: No, it was just the way some people jell, and some don't jell that well. It was just very very fortunate.

ROSS-NAZZAL: I wonder if you would talk about the arrival of the Progress vehicles. If you recall, how many came up? What were your responsibilities in terms of getting ready for the vehicle to come? What did you have to do once they arrived? Then obviously putting stuff back on so they could depart with your trash.

LUCID: I think there were two Progresses that came up while I was there. The arrival of Progress was very exciting. It was the Russians' job. The American didn't really do anything with the arrival of Progress. Yuri would set up the TORU unit in the base block. Then as soon as Progress docked and the systems were all right, it was always very exciting to open the hatch, because they would put personal things in the Progress that they would send up.

Sometimes they sent up fresh fruit. They sent up a lot of onions. Once they sent up all these lemons. It's not like we had sugar, but it was okay. Special things like that. On one of the Progresses you opened up the hatch, and there was a big slab of raw bacon. Now Ukrainians really like raw bacon, so this was an extra special treat for Yuri Onufriyenko.

He took it out; he took his knife, he had a nice big knife, and he was slicing it off. He offered me a piece, and I said, "I don't want to take anything away from you. Please, just enjoy it for me." He laughed. What was interesting is that Yuri and Yury had things, and they would share with me, so I wanted something special to come up that I could share with them.

I thought, and I thought. What could it be? My first thought was mayonnaise, because Russians really love mayonnaise. Yuri and Yury could not get enough of the little mayonnaise packets that were packed in the U.S. food. I would trade the mayonnaise packets for something that they had, because they really really wanted that. That was before they had mayonnaise bottles in plastic like they do now. So I thought well, that won't work. Then I thought what could I ask for, and I thought aha, I'll ask them to put some Twinkies in for me, because Twinkies, they last forever. That'd be so nice to have as a dessert. So Kelly Curtis, who was the support person that was supporting me from NASA—and I think she had just started working, she was in psychological support or whatever they called it. She was very young. That's the

advantage of being young, because you always want to go the extra mile, and she worked so hard.

She got these Twinkies over to Russia. She went to the store, she bought them, and she sent them over to Russia. They were brought to Kazakhstan, but the Russians wouldn't put them on board because they didn't have a use by date or an expiration date. We thought what, Twinkies never expire. I was explaining to Yuri and Yury. I said, "I tried to have something nice for us. I wanted something to share. But here I am ending up with nothing." They just laughed and laughed. They said, "Well, who did NASA give it to?" Then they said, "That's the problem. They were going through the official channels. There's the real way of getting it on board and NASA didn't do it that way."

ROSS-NAZZAL: Oh, that's funny.

LUCID: I think Kelly was really disappointed that she was doing this as something really nice for me, and it didn't work out, but I still give her credit for effort. I assume someplace there in Kazakhstan people really enjoyed the Twinkies, so all was not lost.

ROSS-NAZZAL: Who wouldn't enjoy a Twinkie? You had mentioned food. Several years ago—well, you saw part of the interview with Vickie Kloeris talking about the importance of food on board Station. During Shuttle a lot of people thought that eating food was not a big deal, Shuttle was kind of like a camping trip, but that it had grown in importance, the longer you stayed on orbit, the more important food became to you. I had read Norm had said that the food supply

wasn't adequate during his time on board Mir. I wondered if you would talk about your experience with food and meals on Mir. Was Norm's experience your experience?

LUCID: No. Norm's experience was different because he was involved in some kind of nutritional experiment. They were monitoring his daily intake. Norm really likes to do things right, so he was doing just like he had been instructed to do to get good data, and it wasn't set up quite that way. I wasn't under any of those constraints; I wasn't doing any kind of nutritional experiment. I thought the food on Mir was very, very good. We had Russian food and American food—twice as much Russian food as American food, I think. The American food was just like it was on the Shuttle; it was in the same canisters they sent them up in. The Russian food, it came up on Progress and you unloaded it. But there was a lot of older Russian food that had been left over from other flights that hadn't gotten used up yet. So Yuri Onufriyenko said, "Okay, we're going to eat up the old food before we start in on the new food," which is a reasonable thing for the leader of an expedition to do.

Presumably in the newer food was some of the food that we had chosen, not that there was that much of a variety. But we spent a lot of time eating the older Russian food. You'd mix and match. Then of course Yuri and Yury ate some of the U.S. food too. We just put it out and you ate whatever you wanted to, whenever you ate. But Yuri Onufriyenko did have one rule that whatever you opened up you ate. You finished it up because you didn't want any rotting food laying around in the trash.

Breakfast was the hard thing to figure out what I wanted to eat, but then I found the Russian juice bags. They were really like pulpy fruit, so I just had one of those every morning for breakfast and that worked out fine; that was real good. What I really liked was that the

Russians put a lot of their food in cans. It was just a round can like this [demonstrates], and they had things like potatoes. It was like potato and meat dishes and things like that, different ones. The reason why they were so good is because they were a little greasy. You didn't reconstitute them or anything. You just put it in the warmer.

What Yuri and Yury really liked, me too, was the shrimp cocktail that was in the U.S. food, but there was very little of that, so we would save it for special occasions. We would just divide one up among us. They really liked the little pudding cups that were in there. You wanted to be fair, and everybody had the same amount. I guess I was sort of in charge of the U.S. food since I was U.S. I counted up all the pudding cups, and I said, "Okay, this is how many we have." I divided by three. Then I made a chart, and I marked every time they ate one. I put them up, and I marked it off with a Magic Marker. It worked out really well because we could barter with it. I'll give you a pudding cup if you'll give me this, because it was something that everybody liked. So it worked out really well. It was just a fun thing to do.

ROSS-NAZZAL: I had read about the JELL-O. How did that tradition get established where you would make JELL-O and have that on Sundays?

LUCID: Before I went up on Mir, I was thinking. I heard that Mir had a little refrigerator. I was thinking okay, what can I do to do something special for Yuri and Yury. I had this bright idea. I could ask the food people if they could just put a package of JELL-O in the little containers that they put drinks in. They had done this for me on Shuttle because I don't like coffee so I said, "Hey, could you just put a tea bag in one of the things?" I could put hot water in it, and then I'd have a bag of tea. That was such a wonderful idea; everybody did it after. They had fixed a lot

of tea bags for me. I thought they could just put JELL-O in there, and I can fill it up with water, put it in the refrigerator, and we could have JELL-O. They were so accommodating, and they did that, so I had these bags of JELL-O.

It turned out that Yuri and Yury just absolutely loved it, so I figured out that we had enough for every Sunday that we were supposed to be there. I'd fix it, and we'd have a special treat for Sunday supper. The spoons were sort of long on Mir, so we'd take the spoon and dip it out and share around.

One day I lost my shoes that I used when I ran on the treadmill. You would think that that would not be a bad deal, but oh, I tried running on the treadmill barefoot and it was horrible. I couldn't do it because my feet, there were no calluses anymore on them. I thought, what am I going to do without my shoes? I just had this impression I really needed to run on the treadmill every day if I was going to be able to walk when I got back to Earth.

I knew they had to be on station somewhere, so I told Yuri and Yury. I said, "Okay, my shoes have disappeared. Whoever finds them, they can have a whole bag of JELL-O to themselves on Sunday night." Oh, my goodness, they got looking, and Yury Usachev found them. By the end of the day, he had found them. They'd floated away somewhere. That Sunday night I gave him his JELL-O. He said, "No, I want to share with everybody." I said, "No no no, it's yours." But we did end up sharing. But it was a real incentive.

What was so interesting was when the exchange crew came up then Sasha [Alexander Kaler], who was on that crew, he had heard about the JELL-O, and he asked. I said, "Well, the JELL-O is all gone." It was such a wonderful thing to me, and I was sure everybody else was going to do it too. But you just can't take things for granted. I said, "I'm sure as soon as the

Shuttle gets here, [STS]-79 gets here, there'll be lots of JELL-O. I'll get it for you and you can be in charge of it."

When the Shuttle docked and the food was transferred over, I started going through looking for them, and there was no JELL-O anywhere. When I had to go tell Sasha there was no JELL-O that came up his face just fell. He was crestfallen to think that he was going to be up there for all these months with no JELL-O. I don't know why. I guess people didn't really realize what a treat it was, because Russians really like JELL-O. That was the story of the JELL-O.

ROSS-NAZZAL: You had mentioned a couple of times where either you were considered their guest on board Mir or those weren't your duties, those were the Russian duties. I wonder if you would explain how things operated on board Mir. You mentioned at one point things changed because you started helping. Were there always tasks that were only for Russians and only tasks for you as an American?

LUCID: No. When we were first starting off it was sort of like I think Yuri and Yury—I think that they thought they had to make sure that I was going to have a good time, and that I was a guest so to speak. The first Saturday—what they do is they clean. They give them half a day to clean the Mir. We would wipe juice stains off the walls or whatever was needed, so that was on the Form 24 for the day. They started cleaning up, and I was just helping them. They said, "No no no no, you don't have to do that." I said, "No, we live here together. We do the good things together and the bad things." Not that it was that bad wiping the walls down, but we worked together. I had to tell them that two or three times, but then they let me.

Then I was just accepted doing whatever they were doing. If they were doing in-flight maintenance, trying to fix things, then they would get me to help them, and I would. Of course they were in charge, but I was their helper and I would do whatever. Just like whenever you're working on a vehicle to get it to work. It worked just really well. So no, we just worked together.

ROSS-NAZZAL: Did you have any role when they were getting ready for an EVA [extravehicular activity] and during their EVAs?

LUCID: That was very interesting. I didn't know they were going to do EVAs when I launched. Maybe no one else knew either. But then all of a sudden Yuri said, "Okay, we're going to be doing an EVA." I said, "Okay." They started prepping their suits. He said, "Okay, now our schedule is going to change; we're going to go to sleep now." This was the middle of the afternoon. I said, "Okay." They turned off the lights, and we went to bed for a while.

Then we all got up because they were going to go out and do an EVA. They got dressed in their thermal underwear. It was white with tubes sewn in it. Then Yuri got thinking and he said, "Okay, Shannon, let me tell you. This is what you need to do if we get stuck outside and can't get back in to take the Soyuz home."

He took off the little board with the emergency landing sites for the day, and he started going on and on. His Russian was fast. What could I understand? I think he saw that my eyes were glazing over, so he just said, "Okay, nothing's going to go wrong," so he put that up.

Then the next thing he said was, "Now when we're out doing an EVA, this is what you need to do. You need to enter these commands into the computer." This long string of numbers.

I said, “Whoa, whoa, whoa, I’m not going to remember all these numbers.” He said, “Yes, you can.” He repeated them again.

I said, “Look, I am just an old American woman. I need to have something written down. Say it slow, I’ll write it down, and then I’ll do it.” It was like, “Whoa, I had no idea I was going to be putting commands into Mir when they were outside.” It was a revelation to me.

They went out and they were doing their EVA, and there I was inside the module by myself. It was really neat watching them out there doing their work. Yuri Onufriyenko, I was so impressed. He would tell me it was time to put in a command. Of course, I had the whole string written down. I guess I’d got my point across, I was an old American woman. Because way out there on the end of the Strela out from nowhere, he would repeat letter for letter what he had told me. Russians just have a good memory for lots of things like that where Americans, we depend on writing it all down. I had noticed that before. He just repeated all the commands to me. Of course, I did have my written instructions down, but I was so impressed that he could do that under the stress of an EVA like that.

One of the big things that they were doing, the purpose of the EVA, was to take out this inflatable Pepsi can. They were going to take it out and pop it open. Before they went out, they told me it was my job to photograph the EVA because it was for a commercial for Pepsi. I said, “Well, now wait a minute. I’m a NASA person. I’m not allowed to be involved in any kind of commercial things.” Then I was wondering okay, how can I? Because that would be a firing offense for NASA, but then it dawned on me okay, if anybody said anything and I had to defend my actions I could say, “My commander commanded me to do this, and I was under his authority. I was put by you all under his authority, so I had to obey his commands. He commanded me. It would have been mutiny if I hadn’t. Mutiny in the cosmos. So, when he told

me to take the video, I had to do it. I didn't give it back to Pepsi; whatever anybody else did, I was just following the commands of my commander." That's how I could justify it, make my conscience feel okay.

ROSS-NAZZAL: That's funny. But you're right, it is a concern of endorsements and all that issue.

LUCID: Yes, but they went to such a huge effort to do this Pepsi thing. If my memory serves me right, they actually did it twice on two different EVAs because the first time the Pepsi can was released, Mir was oriented so it was just black as a background, the black sky. They wanted to get it oriented over like the red desert of Africa, so they did it again. I really took some good pictures. As near as I could tell it was never used.

I was at something, I think I was in the Smithsonian, and some guy was there, and he had worked for Pepsi, so I said, "Was it ever used?" He said, "No, because Pepsi went in a different direction." It was some new product that they were doing and then they weren't going to use that, so it was only shown once or twice. All that money and those EVAs.

ROSS-NAZZAL: All that worry.

LUCID: Yes, but it was very interesting

What was so funny was Yuri and Yury, they were coming back in, maybe it was on the second EVA. I'd seen them the first time, and they were just beat, literally beat. After the second, I prepared juice and stuff that they liked so it'd be ready for them as soon as they came in. They could have it, and they wouldn't have to worry about finding anything. They came in,

and they were so happy; they saw the drinks. Yuri took the container. He was going to drink this juice, and he stuck it in his mouth; it had been mislabeled, and it was ketchup. I felt so bad. Here I'd been wanting to do something so nice for him and all he got was ketchup. Context was everything, and a faceful of ketchup after an EVA is not the way to go. It was really funny.

One time when they were out on an EVA they were talking to me, and I said, "Oh, you're going to be surprised when you come back in." Yuri Onufriyenko, he got a little worried. He said, "Surprised? How? Why are we going to be surprised?" I said, "Oh, don't you worry. You all are out there, so I'm commander now of Mir and I can do what I want to." He said, "What are you doing?" I said, "Well, I got these huge American flags, and I've put them all over." I said, "I'm the commander now."

At some point he was not absolutely 100 percent sure that I was just joking. But it was pretty funny. Yury Usachev thought it was just a riot.

ROSS-NAZZAL: Part of how you were all able to work together so well. I know there was a lot of media interest in this flight. I wonder if you would talk about some of the press conferences that you participated in in orbit. Were they similar to your experience on board the Shuttle or were they posing different questions?

LUCID: Oh, no, questions were always the same. Except when I got delayed, they wanted to know how did it feel being like Cinderella when her carriage didn't show up or something. Did I think I was going to turn into a pumpkin? It was so funny, because I was supposed to be doing an interview, so I was floating around waiting for the com to come up. The guy that was doing the interview, he was on the loop, but whatever it was, he wasn't connected into whatever he

needed to get connected into. While we were waiting for everything to come together, we were just talking. He said, “Wow, you’re the second biggest story on the planet right now.” I said, “Really? What’s number one?” He said, “Mad cow disease. Yes, nothing else is going on besides that and you up here.” I thought, well, that all puts it in context. It depends on what people have to talk about. There was a period of time when there was nothing else particularly going on. I think they sort of built it up like here was this American stranded in space. That was a theme for a little bit. Doing interviews was never a highlight of the day.

But it was better on the Shuttle, because you always had other members of the crew that could carry the load. There was always somebody who really enjoyed talking with the press or whatever they were doing. That made it really nice. But I was the only American on Mir.

ROSS-NAZZAL: We’ve talked previously about how noncommunicative, I guess, NASA was when you were in Russia. How did you find out that you would be extending your stay on board Mir? Was that something that NASA let you know, or did you find out another way?

LUCID: How I found out I was going to be staying longer is very interesting. The way I found out was because Shani told me. Shani and her husband Jeff were really good. There’s a ham radio site on NASA. Maybe they still have it. There was a ham radio on Mir. Before launch they wanted me to get a ham radio license and talk to people as you went over whenever you had connection. You could make radio calls on the ham radio. I’ve never been big into doing it. I’ve never even been big to talk on the telephone, especially to strangers.

I told Shani and Jeff, I said, “Hey, if you get your ham radio license, then you can go over to the radio shack and you can talk to me sometimes.” They both did. They got the ham

radio license. I even bought them a cheap ham radio set, but they just used the one at NASA. Shani was working for a contractor and Jeff was working for a contractor, so they were working there at NASA. Whenever they knew that I was going to pass over, they always made it a point to go over there. A lot of times they'd eat their lunch or they'd take a 10-minute break, and Jeff really enjoyed fiddling with the dials and getting the best reception. It was so funny because here I was depending on Shani, my least communicative child. Kawai, she would talk forever about anything. She can just go on and on and on. Of course, Michael was away at college. But Shani, she'd say something and then that was it. She didn't ever have to elaborate. I thought it was just sort of ironic.

But we had to be careful because obviously any time you talk on the ham radio everybody can listen. People really got sort of cross because evidently in the ham radio culture everybody wants to make contact and exchange these little numbers and these little cards. As soon as we would pass within range Shani could talk to me, then she'd start talking, and these other people would be trying to cut in because they wanted to exchange numbers.

I wasn't on the radio to exchange numbers. I was on the radio to find out a little bit of information. But you had to be careful. If Shani said the lawn hadn't been mowed yet, then everybody knew about it. You had to be a little careful what you talked about.

Ellen Baker also showed up out there most of the times I was going over. She was so good about supporting me. Between Shani, Jeff, and Ellen, I was pretty much in with what was going on.

Shani told me that I was going to be extended because the Shuttle launch was delayed. I told her thank you, and we talked a little bit about it. Then the next time they came over, I still hadn't heard anything officially, but then Ellen happened to be out there with somebody else and

they were talking and they said, “Has Shannon been told yet she’s going to be extended? Should we tell her? Do we need to get permission to tell her?” Shani said, “Oh, no problem, she knows. I already told her.” It was really funny.

ROSS-NAZZAL: Did you ever get an official word from anyone?

LUCID: Yes. Frank [L.] Culbertson, who was head of Phase I of the International Space Station, and he did a real nice job running Phase I. But then he got the American time, the time I would talk with Gerstenmaier, so it was on the form that he was going to talk. Yuri and Yury, they looked and said, “Huh, bad news. You’re going to be talking to Frank.” Then Frank, very nicely in an official tone, was telling me how we were slipped. I said, “That’s just real fine.” It was very interesting.

When it was getting close to time when Yuri and Yury were going to go home and we were going to have a crew exchange, I was still going to be there. It was like two or three days before they were exchanged. I was talking to Mike because Bill Gerstenmaier was so good about getting a family tie-up. He tried to get some kind of family tie-up once a week. The com people here in JSC, they worked so hard. They had to come in extra on Sunday so they could route a line over to Russia at the particular time so that Mike could go in, and he could talk to me on the phone. Mike was talking to me, and he said, “Oh, I see that Gennady [Strekalov] is not coming up and that so-and-so is coming up in exchange.” I said, “Really? I haven’t heard that.” Then I asked Mike. I said, “What was the reason they gave?” He said, “Well, Gennady had some kind of a heart problem.” He read it in the newspapers.

Then when I got off, I talked to Yuri and Yury and I said, “Hey, did you know that Gennady is not coming and it’s going to be a different crew? Claudie is coming up with Valeri and Sasha.” They said no, they hadn’t heard. Then as soon as they got in contact with the ground, they asked them, and they said, “Oh, well, yes, the crew is changed out.” Yuri Onufriyenko, I could tell, he was not very happy talking to the ground. That was the only time I remember Yuri and Yury had a conversation—they were talking so fast and I wasn’t included; they were just discussing things at 90 miles an hour—they didn’t appreciate being told at the late date.

I’d never met Sasha. Valeri I knew, but I’d never met Sasha. I said, “Who is he?” They were trying to tell me. They said, “Surely you saw him at the gym sometime; surely you saw him here.” But I just couldn’t remember his face. Then I thought to myself what were the Russians and NASA thinking? That we were going to just open the hatch and surprise! It was so funny. I don’t know why they didn’t know or weren’t told ahead of time. But that was just the way communications worked.

ROSS-NAZZAL: Sounds like a big challenge during that time period and a frustration for y’all.

LUCID: It wasn’t frustrating; it was interesting. That was one of the big advantages of me getting extended; I was able to be there during a crew exchange. The original way it had gone, I wouldn’t have been there for the crew exchange. So, I really lucked out.

ROSS-NAZZAL: Were you okay with the extension? Not like you could have done anything about it. But what was your original thought when you heard you were going to be up there so much longer?

LUCID: Originally, the first thing I thought of was back in the dark ages before Mir. We were always doing space station stuff and getting ready for an American space station. I remember being over in the Lunar and Planetary Institute, over in the mansion that was over there on Clear Lake, and they were having all these meetings. I was there representing CB [Astronaut Office] and the flight docs were there and they were discussing how long can human beings stay in space. How can we do this? There were big things that we had to do incrementally. We couldn't just go and start out with a long period of time, and no, we didn't have data from the Russians.

I remember it was a big deal that we had to have I forget how many Americans that would be up there for less than 100 days, then you could gradually work your way up to 100 days. So, my first thought was huh, here I am, I'm going to be up here for over 100 days with no incremental lead up to it. I thought that it certainly hasn't bothered Russians, so it's not going to bother me.

ROSS-NAZZAL: Did it have any impact on say food or anything, you being extended? Were there any food shortages or did you have to cut back on things?

LUCID: No, we didn't have any food shortages because there was lots of old food.

ROSS-NAZZAL: Oh, that's right.

LUCID: It was funny because I told you we didn't have e-mail, but I was able to have contact with my family. Before I launched I had heard that there was a packet system where the Russians in Mission Control, they could send up things over the ham radio sites, and then you could pick it up on your computer. This is in the days when you had floppy disks. So, I told Gaylen. I said, "Look, you have your computer. My family has a computer there. I don't know how you're going to work this." Gaylen was the flight surgeon, and the flight wouldn't have been possible without him. I told him, "Your main job is to make sure that my family can communicate with me. They have your e-mail address. They're going to send you e-mails every day. They promised me you're going to get an e-mail from them. It's your job to figure out how to get it up on station. However you have to do it, then you've got to do that." Gaylen, shows how wonderful he was, he was able to talk with the Russian controllers and figure out how.

When they didn't have anything else that needed to go up, they would let him have the tail end of the time. Then he'd send it up, and I could put it on my little floppy disk, and then go and read it on my computer. That's a long way around. That's how I kept in contact with the family.

So I sent a note to the family and said, "Oh, I'm not coming home until September or something." I told the girls if they came to the landing that they could go and I'd get them a new outfit because they liked to shop back in those days. I said, "Have you gotten something new to wear to the landing?" They said, "We have no idea what season of the year you're coming home, so we can't."

ROSS-NAZZAL: You just said the flight wouldn't have been successful without Gaylen, and you had talked about the importance of Bill. But would you talk about his importance to the mission beyond communication?

LUCID: Oh, Gaylen's? Yes. Gaylen was the flight doc, so his responsibility to make sure that I was happy, not wealthy and wise. He did such an outstanding job. He was there in Star City when we were there. I think I would have been old enough to have been Gaylen's mother. He just bent over backwards. He wanted to make sure that he did everything he could for me. One time close to the end, we were doing a suited run. It was one of the few times we actually did anything in the simulator with Yuri and Yury. In Russia the winter is really dry, so your skin got very, very dry. You know how your fingernails crack around the fingernails? This one piece of skin was there and I didn't want to tear the suit because I was going to get in the suit, so I put a Band-Aid on. I didn't think anything of it, so we went and did it.

Then Gaylen always walked back with me, and he said, "Shannon, what's wrong with your finger?" I said, "Well, absolutely nothing. Why?" He said, "Well, you had a Band-Aid on it." Evidently the Russians had seen that so they'd come and asked him. Oh, my goodness, they just raked Gaylen over the coals because I had this Band-Aid on and he didn't know why. I think it made him feel like he was two years old. I said, "Gaylen, I just didn't want to tear their suit." We laughed about it.

But then what was so funny later during the flight, and I don't know why I had them, but on Progress there was always a packet of notes from family and friends. Kelly Curtis would collect them and then send them over to Russia, and they'd be put in the Progress, and that was always really nice to be able to get these. But one of the kids I guess, they were at a loss of how

many times can you say, “We miss you.” But when pressure from Kelly is being put on them that they have to get some notes in. One of them, I don’t know which one it was, had a card, and they put in some fluorescent Band-Aids because they were in the house and they were just looking around for something. So I had a few of these fluorescent Band-Aids on orbit and so I thought well, now that’s really cool.

Then one time we were doing a big PR [public relations] thing, it was all three of us and we were going to be photographed. It was a videoconference. We were sitting there, and I was all dressed up in my pink flight suit that the Russians had made special for me. I thought hmm, what can I do to give a little joy into Gaylen’s day. So I put a fluorescent Band-Aid around my finger. As we were sitting there and we were answering questions I just always made sure that my hand was there. Then later that night when Gaylen came on for a minute to ask if I was okay, he had some time, and he said, “Shannon, what is wrong with your finger?” Oh, my goodness, I just cracked up, and I just laughed. I could not have laughed harder than I laughed. It’s funny when you laugh real hard in zero G because you really do roll. I was just laughing up a storm, and then he remembered, and then he thought it was funny, and I said, “Well, you’ve passed the ultimate test of a flight doc. You noticed I had the Band-Aid on.” It was just so funny. It didn’t take much to make your life merry when you were on Mir.

ROSS-NAZZAL: Tell me more about this pink flight suit. I don’t think I’ve seen it. I think normally when I’ve seen photos of you, you’re wearing some sort of blue suit.

LUCID: The Russians made the pink suit for me as a dress-up suit. I wore it for special PRs. You’ve probably seen it in some pictures.

ROSS-NAZZAL: You did mention that you had a new crew arrive. What was your role in getting ready for them to come? Did you have to do any sort of preparation for their arrival?

LUCID: Oh, yes, we got all ready. Then Yuri and Yury told me to make things nice for Claudie. Claudie was the French astronaut that was coming up. I knew Claudie because I'd interacted some with her in Star City, and her English was superb, her Russian was outstanding, and I assume her French was good; I'm making that assumption since she was French. She just had excellent communication skills. We were looking forward to her coming up.

I found her personal stuff that had come up with Progress and put it in Priroda because she was going to stay in Priroda. We got that together. The night before, what I had done, the little door that made the WCS [waste collection system] private, the Velcro had gotten really bad on it, so it didn't really stick right. Then Yuri and Yury got working, and they took the WCS apart and put in new parts. I said, "What are y'all doing?" You're supposed to give people a heads-up if you're tearing these things down. They said, "Oh, Claudie is coming, we need to make this really nice. We need to make sure the WCS works." I said, "Okay, you guys, you're doing all this maintenance to make everything all nice for Claudie, but you didn't make it all nice for me?" We laughed.

We finally got the WCS working. I was going to put new Velcro on it, so I did that. That night I didn't say anything, but then we were at the table and we were floating around, and then I took a big mallet hammer that was there. I was starting to float off, and Yuri Onufriyenko said, "Where are you going? What are you going to do with that hammer?" I said, "Oh, I'm making the WCS really nice for Claudie. I'm just making a few repairs." He got so worried, and he wanted to know what on Earth I was doing. Then Yury Usachev, he didn't know, but he knew it

was something, and so he was thanking me for making all these things. I was laughing so hard. Finally, I told them that I just replaced the Velcro. He was really a little worried there seeing me going around with a hammer. We did that. Then what else?

As they were coming up, they said, “Oh, we got a French flag. We ought to get the French flag out.” We got it out, and it was huge. They said, “Well, we can’t have one flag bigger than the other,” because we had a Russian and American flag there. I said, “I’ll fix it.” So, while they were coming into dock, I took a needle and thread, because the Russians had needle and thread on board, and I folded the flag so it still looked like a French flag with the stripes and sewed it so the size was comparable with the other flags. That was my main job getting ready as they were coming in, to sew the flag. I guess sort of like Betsy Ross. I never thought of that, but it must be in the American genes to sew flags.

Then the funniest thing happened. The hatch opened, so they’re coming out. Yuri and Yury were right there in the front and they were so excited because that’s exciting to see some other human beings after all this time. They had Claudie coming out first because she was the visitor, so she floated out. Then Yury Usachev hugged her and said, “Hello, Shannon.” Then Yuri Onufriyenko hugged her and said, “Hello, Shannon.” I just about cracked up. I told the guys, I said, “Look, you guys, every female in the world is not named Shannon.” But that was just really funny. I guess because that’s what they had said for so long, and the mind hadn’t quite—

ROSS-NAZZAL: Hadn’t quite caught up yet.

LUCID: But that was hilarious.

ROSS-NAZZAL: How did things change with new folks coming on board till Yuri and Yury left?

LUCID: It was really nice. Valeri was there and Sasha was there and Yuri and Yury and then Claudie and me. But in a way—and it sounds odd because there were six of us on board, but that was the only time I felt the least bit lonely on Mir. It's very understandable because Yuri and Yury were totally working with Valeri and Sasha, bringing them up to speed, so the four of them were all together. Claudie was working with the French ground. They had a lot more communication than the Americans. She only had however many days it was that she was going to be there. She had to get all this stuff done, so she was very very busy doing that.

By that time pretty much all the American stuff had been wrapped up; there wasn't a whole lot. I really couldn't help Yuri and Yury because they were with Valeri and Sasha, and I couldn't really help Claudie. I did help her some finding stuff, but I had to work a little bit to find ways to keep occupied.

The one thing that I was a little jealous of Claudie, oh my goodness, I saw the flight data file that the French had, and it was so perfect. Because the French had worked a long time with the Russians, they knew how things worked, and compared to the flight data file I had it was way better.

ROSS-NAZZAL: You were also getting ready for STS-79 at some point to arrive. Did you have to do any preparations for Shuttle coming?

LUCID: The ground had stuff. I had to get stuff together that we were going to transfer over, so I spent a lot of time gathering all the stuff up that the ground wanted to be transferred over 79 that they were bringing back.

ROSS-NAZZAL: What sort of handover did you give to John [E.] Blaha?

LUCID: Oh, we had a really nice time. John Blaha came on board, and I had flown with John before, so it was always a real pleasure to be able to meet up with him again. We had, as we talked about earlier, trained together in Russia for a year. I was telling him what it was like and why I thought things worked well and told him it was important to eat with the crew and to be with the crew.

Valeri actually knew some English, so he was in luck there. We just had a real nice time. But it wasn't like flying together because John was on the Mir crew, and so he had to be with them.

As soon as we docked, I was a member of the 79 crew. Oh, my goodness, Tom [Thomas D.] Akers, he was like the loadmaster loading up all the stuff and transferring stuff over and getting stuff back. He had me working. We were working together, but he was telling me what to do. I was bringing all the stuff over, and we were busy packing up the half Spacelab module that we had that we were getting ready to go home. We were just really busy as the Shuttle crew getting things ready. It was sort of interesting because I immediately became one of the Shuttle crew because they're always overbooked, so there was lots of stuff that, since I knew how to do different stuff on the Shuttle, just fell normally into that. I was real busy with the Shuttle crew. John was real busy with the Mir crew.

It's really two separate crews even though you're connected together. There's not a whole lot of time just to sit around and do nothing, because the crew exchanges were very busy times. But it was very good to see John. Then as I already mentioned, I felt bad I couldn't find the JELL-O for Sasha. Then as we departed and we left to come back, I thought wow, there's John, he's getting to stay up there, and he's going to have a wonderful time. I felt a little bit envious. But I was glad to be going home.

ROSS-NAZZAL: I bet your family was glad for you to be home too.

LUCID: I'm not sure.

ROSS-NAZZAL: Before you left, I'm curious. Did public affairs communicate with you at all, Houston Public Affairs or NASA Headquarters [Washington, DC], about the fact that you're going to be maybe in like a Sally Ride situation? There's a lot of interest in you and the fact that you were up in space for this long and you held all these records. Was that anything that anyone had talked to you about?

LUCID: No.

ROSS-NAZZAL: Were you surprised by the amount of interest and the celebrity that you had suddenly developed overnight?

LUCID: Yes, it did take me a little bit by surprise because up to that point the whole world had been Bill Gerstenmaier, Gaylen, and myself. That was my little world, and then of course I was in the world with Yury and Yuri, but the subpart of that world was just the three of us. Really it was us three and that was it. So, it was a little bit of a surprise.

ROSS-NAZZAL: I did want to ask you about landing because there was a big deal put on the fact that you walked out. I wondered if you had thought about this beforehand. If you had thought I have to walk out of here. I'm a woman, if someone helps me out that's not going to look good. Or did you just feel like I can walk out, and that's why I'm going to walk out?

LUCID: I'd landed on the Shuttle a lot of times and always walked out, so why wouldn't I? You know what I mean? It just never occurred to me not to walk out. Now the one thing that happened was my helmet broke. The screws wouldn't come out. So, the suit techs, they had to work a little bit to get the helmet off. But that was the only off nominal situation. I really hadn't given it much of a thought. After all, that's why I was running that stupid treadmill every day, because I was planning to be able to walk when I got back to Earth. But no. How else would I have gotten out? That's just what you do.

ROSS-NAZZAL: The media just made a big deal out of it.

LUCID: Media just always likes to make a big deal out of everything.

ROSS-NAZZAL: I think even Dan [Daniel S.] Goldin and was it Dave [David C.] Leestma? I think there were quotes from both of them talking about what a strong woman you were. You were walking out by yourself.

LUCID: What else were they going to say? Are they going to say, “Oh, her hair looks gorgeous today. It hasn’t been washed really in six months and hasn’t been cut, but oh, the gorgeous look of it?”

ROSS-NAZZAL: What do you think was the high point of that Mir mission for you if you had to pick one thing?

LUCID: Hmm. Actually, when I think back, it’s all the good times that Yuri and Yury and I had together. That’s really the high point of any Shuttle mission. You can do all sorts of wonderful, extraordinary things. Some people will think that this flight was so much better because they got to do this, this, this, and this other flight was just a drab flight, didn’t have anything spectacular. But really what makes a Shuttle flight and made the Mir flight, it’s who you fly with. It’s the crew you’re with that makes all the difference. It’s the crew you’re with that you remember as time goes on. It’s not the work you did, or it’s not that you got to launch the most fabulous whatever to whatever. It’s who you worked with and how you got along and the dynamics of the crew. So that was really the high point of Mir, was the fact that it was so nice to work with somebody for so long and have things work out every day.

[End of interview]