

Conversation with Martin Raines, MSC R. & Q.A. director, ~~MBEY~~
and Safety Director, at NASA Hq. 18 January 1972, with RS

Marty Raines is doing TDY at Hq. until Apollo 16, following the retirement of Jerome Lederer. "I think they just want someone up here at whom they can point a finger and say, 'he is the safety director.'" His title here is acting safety director. His task is complicated by Chuck Mathews's moving his new shuttledirectorate into Lederer's office.

"Gilruth's retirement as MSC director came as a big shock," said Raines, "At the staff meeting last Friday ^{Jan. 14} you could hear a pin drop. Gilruth just said, 'This is my last day at MSC. If I'm going to retire I'd might as well do it now.'" Gilruth's new job, Director of Personnel Development, or something like that is no more than a stopgap to retirement, everyone believes. Gilruth is being succeeded by Chris Kraft.

This sudden move is a puzzler, as Carl Praktish and Gil Roth were saying this afternoon. Raines said he flew from Washington to Houston on a NASA aircraft with Kraft and Gilruth last Friday. It was a quietly jovial, cocktail-drinking trip. No mention of the news that was to stun MSC and the rest of NASA next day.

Why step down without any warning, or any hiatus to break in the new man (not that Kraft needs it)? Why no award of a medal? (Or will that come when he finally retires? What's the hurry?

Praktish has a theory that Gilruth's dealings with the Russians on mutually compatible docking adapters may be the answer. Gilruth has led the American team to Moscow ^{twice} (~~HOW MANY TIMES?~~). The Russians came to Houston recently. P. and Roth mention that an announcement on the results of one of the Moscow meetings had to be retracted by the Secretary of State. ^{Oct 70}
^{Dec 71}
^{June 71}

Could it be that the Russians have demanded a fall guy for something or other, prior to Nixon's Moscow visit in May, and Gilruth is it? Sounds impossible, but who can tell? There must be an explication somewhere.

Cross ref.: Gilruth, Kraft