

Chris Hadfield discusses his new book, “Final Orbit” on CP24.

Transcript

0:00

Well, former astronaut Chris Hadfield is

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back with his much anticipated novel

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Final Orbit, which is set in the

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backdrop of the highstakes space race

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between the US, Soviet Union, and China

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in the 1970s. But along with it, there's

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plenty of intrigue, espionage, and

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thrills, the Cold War, of course, uh,

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features. And joining us live this

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morning, not from space, but right here

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on planet Earth is Chris Hadfield. Uh,

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Commander Hadfield. Chris Hadfield,

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always good to talk to you about these,

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uh, series of books here. Let's start

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with this. Your your book opens before

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leaving the first chapter. Many of the

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people are real. Much of this actually

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happened. I'm curious about your process

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of writing a book that is based on some

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part fact and some part fiction. It's

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not your own story, but you have to

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piece together fact and fiction. The

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challenge involved in putting that

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together. Can you talk about that?

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Yeah, it makes it really fun to write,

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Nick. you you you look at what truly

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happened in history and and the the

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weird uh confluence of events in this

0:55

case in the summer of 75 with two women

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who shot at President Ford that summer

1:00

actually fired the pistol. one missed by

1:02

4 in and uh all the aftermath of the

1:06

Vietnam war and the race riots in the

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states and then the cold war and then

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the rise of of Chinese space flight and

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uh this symbolic docking between the

1:16

Soviet Union and the Americans. All of

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that was happening at the same time and

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there was this group called the weather

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underground blowing up bombs in

1:24

government institutions all across the

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US. So as an author, you look at all

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that uh combination of threads of real

1:32

world and then that gives me room to

1:34

take my main characters and weave a plot

1:36

of things that just might have happened.

1:39

Yeah. I mean as an author that must be

1:41

remarkable and Cassic, you know, is sort

1:43

of your main character. We've seen him

1:44

in this trilogy here. How much enjoyment

1:46

do you get out of creating this

1:48

character in the real world but also a

1:51

fictional world?

1:52

It's the weirdest thing. uh my my my

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main character Cass Zamechus as you

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mentioned

1:58

uh you know I I just made him up like 5

2:01

years ago but now he's a real guy that

2:02

that I I I kind of bounced ideas off

2:05

him. It's a little bit uh weird inside

2:07

my head and and the other main

2:09

characters. Uh the two of them

2:12

as I write the book I just put them into

2:14

the situation and then I let them do

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what they would naturally do as

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developed characters. And sometimes that

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takes the book in a whole direction I

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wasn't expecting. Like well of course

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this is what Svet Lana would do right

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now and now how am I going to deal with

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that plot twist. So it makes it really

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fun and interesting as an author to to

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follow those two uh in my mind real

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people through the guideposts of the

2:36

reality of the world that

2:38

and as a reader those plot twists make

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you really like turn the page. I mean

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this is a real page turner. It's over

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400 pages but you can really rip through

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this. Uh but you also then Chris get

2:47

kind of deep into the technical side of

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things based on your obviously

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experience as a test fighter, pilot,

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astronaut etc. here. How how how

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difficult is it for you to sort of edit

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yourself when it comes to the level of

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expertise you have about space, about

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flight, about planes, weaponry, etc. But

3:01

then also making it approachable for an

3:03

average viewer to read and say, "Oh my

3:05

gosh, I can't even fathom what he's

3:07

talking about now."

3:08

Well, if you look at that video you're

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running right now, it's a great example

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of it. Um, that's one of the most

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complicated human creations ever, the

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International Space Station. How do you

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make it so that people get a sense of

3:19

what it's really like? And to play music

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and record a well-known song like Space

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Ody up there, suddenly it becomes a

3:26

place that people live. And in my books,

3:29

the place and the technology, it's like

3:31

another character. It's super important.

3:34

Things that happen to the spaceship,

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it's as if it was this big hulking beast

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that has its own internal problems. And

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so the technical side becomes a really

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key part of the plot. But what really

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matters is how does it affect the lives

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of the uh of the people on board and the

3:50

people that are back on Earth and and

3:52

that's where the real page turning

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intrigue comes from and the book is just

3:56

getting killer reviews. I'm really

3:58

delighted by the reaction so far.

4:00

I I'm sure you are and I've I've been

4:01

reading some of those reviews, Chris,

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and it is remarkable. So congratulations

4:04

to you on that. Of course, this book

4:06

though wouldn't really have come to life

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without not only your depth of research

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and the creativity and the imagination

4:11

in your own mind, but you have a real

4:12

list of acknowledgements in this book as

4:14

well. Like the access you got, the

4:15

information you got to really deeply and

4:18

and accurately in a way put together

4:20

this partly made up, partly real story.

4:24

Yeah, I'm really lucky to I put in the

4:26

back of the book a little thing of hey,

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this is what's real about the book. So

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you don't have to go chat GBT it, but uh

4:32

being able to call like Jean CR, the the

4:35

the guy the flight director in mission

4:38

control who was there during Apollo 13

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and the whole Apollo era or or uh Bob

4:43

Krippen who was the Capcom at the time.

4:46

friends of mine and and then I it's a

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little uh uncomfortable but some of the

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people that die in the book I knew those

4:53

guys but so so there's it's weird to to

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write the story where things happen to

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them but I try and be factual and

5:00

respectful and really get us let

5:03

everybody see what those people were

5:04

really like under this bizarre set of

5:06

circumstances and and I'm just so

5:09

pleased with how the book has come out.

5:10

I can't wait for release day here on

5:12

October 7th so other people can get it

5:14

in their hands. Yeah, only a few days

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from now and all of all of what you just

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said comes off the page indeed. Chris,

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this is Final Orbit. We hope it's not

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your final work. I'm sure it won't be,

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but Chris Hadfield, always appreciate

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the time. Thanks for joining us here on

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Breakfast.

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Hey, great to talk with you. Thanks very

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much.