

In August of 1991, in Moscow, some counterrevolutionaries attempted to oust the then Soviet Union President, Mikhail Gorbachev. Showing bravery that took many by surprise, tens of thousands of civilians formed a live shield around the Moscow White House, surrounding the government building to protect Gorbachev from troops ordered to storm the building and arrest him. Thanks to the Russian people, the coup failed.

In appreciation, Russian Mayor Gavriil Popov decided to bring the Monsters of Rock show to Moscow for the Moscovites. In September, at the behest of Mikhail Gorbachev, Tushino Airfield in Northwest Moscow was used to host a free Monsters of Rock concert. This is the same airport the Soviets had been using since 1933 to showcase the Soviet Air Force. The concert would feature AC/DC, Metallica, the Black Crowes, and Pantera. The attending crowd was unofficially estimated to be 1.6 million people, the highest attended performance ever recorded at that time.

I'm Charlie "Cosmo" Wilson. The lighting director for the AC/DC portion of the show.

While I could write a novel on the things that happened there, here is one story that stands out more than others, and I think you might enjoy. As I said previously, the gig was being held at the Tushino Airfield. There were hundreds of aircraft on the field, mostly World War II planes and plenty of Russian helicopters. Those who know me, know of my love of aircraft, and know I was in absolute heaven with all these Cold War relics.

While the opening acts were on stage, there was some time before AC/DC was to come on so I was free to wander around the old airfield. Just off to the side of one of the hangars, I noticed something that wasn't an airplane. I went closer for a better look, and discovered that it was a spheroid capsule with re-entry burn marks on it. Upon closer inspection, I could not believe my eyes - it was a spacecraft! This was a real USSR capsule that was flown in space! It was either a Vostok or Voskhod capsule, just sitting there on the grass!

I was awestruck! I had to go and see it and touch it - I mean, this was history! Here I was in the land of our enemy of the Cold War, and there, a few hundred feet away from me, was a Soviet Spacecraft! There were soldiers everywhere, but most of them were watching the spectacle of the show. Most had never seen a Rock Concert before, let alone one of this magnitude. I knew they'd be a little distracted, or I was hoping they would be.

I nonchalantly made my way over to the capsule. I was getting closer and closer, trying not to attract the attention of the soldier who was guarding it. I finally got to it and I was blown away! It was only about eight feet in diameter. It had a rough outside surface, and it was very apparent it had flown due to the re-entry burn marks. I was mesmerized by this amazing artifact! I was

almost in disbelief that I was actually touching it. This had not only flown in space, but was from the USSR! I was really in a state of amazement!

I meticulously studied the spacecraft in detail and noticed there was a hatch, but it didn't have a handle. Instead, it had large bolts, a lot of them, in a circular pattern. Some were loose, but most appeared to be rusted tight. Too tight for me to turn them by hand. You know where this is going, yeah, I had to get a look inside.

Suddenly, out of the corner of my eye, I saw one of the soldiers heading my way, so I quickly ran through the tall unkept grass back towards the band's compound. I excitedly told a few of the crew of my rare find, and they were as excited as I was and they wanted to check it out as well. I told them about the bolts, and they agreed with me that we should try to take the hatch off and check out the inside. They were large bolts and I knew that none of the crescent wrenches we had for lighting would fit. That's when I remembered that the staging crew had similar large bolts on the stage. I went to them and asked if I could borrow their largest crescent wrench. I knew it would work. All we had to do now was not get caught, or shot!

The three of us crept back over to the capsule, trying not to attract the attention of the guard. Fortunately, the one guard was still fascinated by the show. Trying not to sway just a little to the blasting music. We giggled like high school troublemakers as we made it to the capsule undetected. The wrench fit! Slowly, one by one, we started unscrewing the bolts. Two of us pushing down on the big wrench for leverage. We were probably about halfway done when the guard spotted us. Hoping to avoid a gunshot, we quickly took off again and hid, propped up against the side of the hangar like spy's from a 1960s movie. We waited a few minutes as he went back to enjoying the show.

By this time, it was getting darker, so it was easier for us to blend in with the tall grass. We crept back to the capsule undetected and continued to take off the remaining bolts. We were nearly done and once again, the guard saw us and scared us off. Yet again, he went back to watching the show. We were determined and after a few minutes, we snuck back to remove the final bolts.

We finally got the last bolt off! I turned the wrench in a crazy and excited anticipation and removed it. The three of us looked at each other grinning ear to ear, we put our fingertips under the edge of the hatch, and pulled. And we pulled some more. It was on tight, but we could feel it just barely moving. We pulled in unison, and we let go, and we pulled, and we let go. Finally, we had it out enough that we could get more of a grip around the hatch. We got our hands around it, we got a real good grip, and we pulled with all of our weight. Suddenly, the hatch let loose, and

we went flying backwards. We fell on our backs, with the large hatch landing on top of us. We were ecstatic and giddy with excitement! We looked around, and thankfully, the guard was so into the concert that he hadn't noticed.

We got back up on our feet, and were anxious to explore the inside of this relic of space travel. It was dark out by this time. We looked inside the hatch, and lo and behold – SHIT! There was another hatch with even larger bolts! I knew there was no wrench available that would take these oversized nuts off, and there were no Home Depot in sight within 6,000 miles, so we strode back to the backstage compound, defeated and sad that we didn't get to see inside the capsule. However, we were so thrilled that we got to take the hatch off of such a piece of Cold War history.