



The Interstellar Age: Inside the Forty-Year Voyager Mission

By Jim Bell

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The story of the men and women who drove the Voyager spacecraft mission— told by a scientist who was there from the beginning.

The Voyager spacecraft are our farthest-flung emissaries—11.3 billion miles away from the crew who built and still operate them, decades since their launch.

Voyager 1 left the solar system in 2012; its sister craft, *Voyager 2*, will do so in 2015. The fantastic journey began in 1977, before the first episode of *Cosmos* aired. The mission was planned as a grand tour beyond the moon; beyond Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn; and maybe even into interstellar space. The fact that it actually happened makes this humanity's greatest space mission.

In *The Interstellar Age*, award-winning planetary scientist Jim Bell reveals what drove and continues to drive the members of this extraordinary team, including Ed Stone, *Voyager*'s chief scientist and the one-time head of NASA's Jet Propulsion Lab; Charley Kohlhase, an orbital dynamics engineer who helped to design many of the critical slingshot maneuvers around planets that enabled the *Voyagers* to travel so far; and the geologist whose Earth-bound experience would prove of little help in interpreting the strange new landscapes revealed in the *Voyagers*' astoundingly clear images of moons and planets.

Speeding through space at a mind-bending eleven miles a second, *Voyager 1* is now beyond our solar system's planets. It carries with it artifacts of human civilization. By the time *Voyager* passes its first star in about 40,000 years, the gold record on the spacecraft, containing various music and images including Chuck Berry's "Johnny B. Goode," will still be playable.



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