

Interview Assessment #2

Name: Dr. Simon Clemett

Profession: Senior Planetary Scientist

Location: NASA Johnson Space Center--- Houston, TX

Date: September 29, 2017--- 4:30 PM

I had the privilege to talk to Dr. Simon Clemett, who works at NASA's Johnson Space Center. I got into contact with Dr. Clemmet through my mentor, as he works with her quite frequently. Dr. Clemett work primarily revolves around finding organics in extraterrestrial materials and is responsible for building the *ultra*-L2MS facility at JSC.

Dr. Clemett started off by discussing his early life, more specifically the obstacles he faced as a little child. I was really inspired by how he overcame those hardships and became the person he is today. At a young age, he was diagnosed with dyslexia. He had trouble reading and struggled with writing neatly. Though he was going through so much, he never gave up. He found a way out of this mess and that was through computers. Dr. Clemett told me how computers/technology allowed him organize his thoughts better. He worked really hard in school and was accepted into Oxford University. After finishing his studies Oxford, he wanted obtain his PhD in the States. He told me how he picked six at random and went to the prettiest school, which was Stanford University in California. Dr. Clemett did have a very good sense of humor.

Knowing that Dr. Clemett research mainly about Mars, I asked why Mars interested him so much and why it is crucial for humans to go the planet in the near future. After listening to my question, Dr. Clemett told me that Mars' geological formations clearly indicate that it was a different planet than it is now. Also, it is our closest neighbor. That means we have the capacity to go there and conduct research on the planet. He also told me that is really interesting that Mars formed earlier than Earth and it still has a weak magnetic field. This could potentially lead to new discoveries if astronauts successfully go to Mars.

In addition to this, I asked him what he would do if had the opportunity to Mars. Dr. Clemmet told me that he would go study the biochemical reactions in glaciers that are located on the north pole, rift valleys, and go to also go to the largest volcano in the solar system, Olympus Mons. The volcano would give scientists clues about Mars' geological history.

As we were talking about martian volcanoes, we both found it amazing that even though Mars doesn't have any plate tectonics and a mantle like Earth, there are still subtle changes on the sides of Olympus Mons. This indicates the volcano is probably not extinct but dormant. Dr. Clemett definitely felt really excited when we discussed this possibility.

Overall, the interview went really well. I learned a lot from Dr. Clemmet and was inspired to never give up. Most people think all scientists had it easy during their academic life but that isn't. Some of them struggled and they are changing this world not solely because of their intelligence but because of their dedications and efforts.