

0. THE TRANSCRIPTS - Story Preface

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This NASA graphic is part of the Space Agency's tribute to the seven astronauts who lost their lives aboard *Challenger* during the shuttle's STS-51-L mission (on January 28, 1986). The tribute was created by NASA/Lynda Brammer. Click on the public-domain image for a full-page view.

When NASA released the transcripts of the crew-to-ground communication, *The New York Times* sued NASA (scroll down to located *New York Times Co. v. NASA*, Civil No. 86-2860 - D.D.C. June 3, 1987) to also have access to the actual audio tape.

Recovered in the ocean, the tape had not been released for public use. NASA wanted to protect the privacy of the families, among other things.

The District Court initially held the tapes should be turned over. With both sides appealing different rulings, the case ultimately ended up with the United States Supreme Court.

The Justices directed the District Court to rule whether the privacy of the crew families would be invaded if the tapes were released. Weighing the right of the public to know, and the right of privacy possessed by the families, the Court ruled against *The New York Times*.

The audio tapes have never been released.

Litigation, however, did not start - or end - with the transcript dispute. The families also filed a lawsuit - but for very different reasons.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/THE-TRANSCRIPTS-Challenger-Disaster>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/THE-TRANSCRIPTS-Challenger-Disaster>