

EL MO DRAX'S SUPERSONIC ROCKET SHIP BLOWED UP

Not exactly breaking news at this point, but the SpaceX Starship blew up after a successful launch this morning. Not entirely clear if it was inherent in the vehicle, or if it was intentionally taken out by SpaceX as it was malfunctioning. Either way, a disaster. From the New York Times:

"SpaceX's Starship rocket exploded on Thursday, minutes after lifting off from a launchpad in South Texas. The spacecraft, the most powerful ever to launch, failed to reach orbit, but it was not a total failure for the private spaceflight company.

Before the launch, Elon Musk, the company's founder, had tamped down expectations, saying it might take several tries before Starship succeeds at this test flight, which was to reach speeds fast enough to enter orbit before splashing down in the Pacific Ocean near Hawaii."

As much as I dislike Musk, and trust me I have likely been doing so longer than most anybody, the SpaceX program is part and parcel of NASA now, and getting into, and out of, space is progress for the US and humanity. It really is "rocket science", and it is not easy. There have always been things like this in the human approach to space. But no lives were lost this morning, and much was probably learned.

You could tell there was something wrong though. There was film of the bottom of the giant rocket, and there were several of the 33 engine pods that were clearly not firing. Was that the catastrophic failure, or was there really a failure to separate stages? The news people do

not seem to know, and neither do I.

The SpaceX term has been “rapid unscheduled disassembly”. Orwellian almost, but I guess. In short, it blew up, by whatever mechanism.

Forget El Mo on this one, SpaceX is effectively part of the government now, and their effort should be supported.

All thanks to Moonraker by Ian Fleming and Supersonic Rocket Ship by Ray Davies and the Kinks.