

NBC's *Today*

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1 minute and 32 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: News at 8; NASA Delays Artemis Moon Launch]

TOM COSTELLO: But that may not be the only problem. A former astronaut and thermal protection engineer is warning, the heat shield on the crew's Orion spaceship could fail as it hits 5,000 degrees on re-entry. [TO COMARDA] Do you fear this crew could lose their lives?

CHARLIE CAMARDA: Absolutely.

COSTELLO: Charlie Camarda flew on the first mission following the space shuttle Columbia disaster that killed all seven astronauts after the heat shield was damaged on liftoff. Now Camarda IS pointing to the heat shield on the Orion capsule, which showed burn marks, cracks, and pieces missing after the uncrewed Artemis I flight in 2022. This time, four astronauts will be on board Artemis II.

CAMARDA: I don't think NASA should be flying a crew on this vehicle. It is a deviant heat shield. We know it's a deviant heat shield. We do not know how it's going to fail or how we can predict it's going to fail.

COSTELLO: But NASA says it is changing Orion's return angle to ensure the crew is protected.

JEFF RADIGAN: We've changed the entry profile so that we're flying a profile that the heat shield can handle.

COSTELLO: Commander Reed Wiseman on *60 Minutes*.

REED WISEMAN [on CBS's *60 Minutes*, 02/01/26]: We're going to come in hotter, a little bit faster than Artemis I and based on the issues that we have with the heat shield, that will keep us safe.

COSTELLO: So, NASA chief Jared Isaacman says internal and external engineering teams have reviewed the heat shield analysis and they agree with NASA. But everybody knows this is one of the most dangerous moments of the mission, as we saw when the space shuttle Columbia came apart on reentry.