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The world changed 50 years ago, on October 4, 1957, when the US public heard the shocking news that the Soviet Union had successfully launched the first satellite, Sputnik I. Why didn't the US beat the Soviets in this first crucial round of the space race? NOVA reveals an astonishing behind-the-scenes story of the politics and personalities that collided over the earliest efforts to get America into space, long before the founding of NASA. Anticommunist witch-hunts drove some of the nation's most talented rocketry pioneers out of the country even as it welcomed Wernher von Braun and his former Nazi colleagues. With help from Walt Disney, von Braun's vision of future space travel swiftly captivated American TV watchers. But even as he became the first media star of the Space Age, von Braun's attempts to build space probes were hobbled by inter-service rivalries. In *Sputnik Declassified*, NOVA details the previously untold story of the technological and political missteps that made the US lose out to the Soviets' beeping electronic basketball.

CREDITS

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