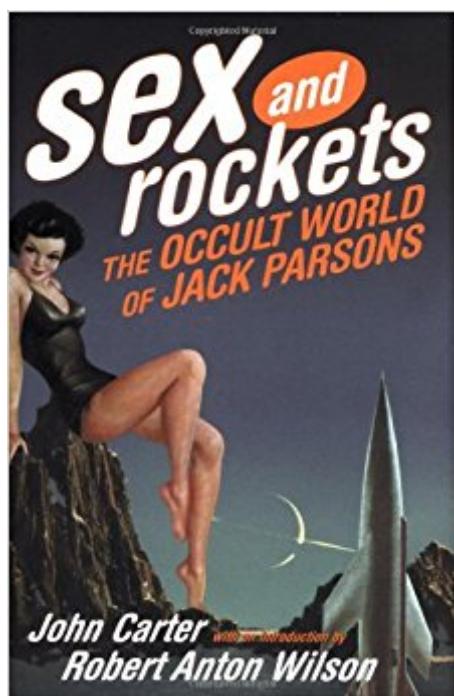


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Sex And Rockets: The Occult World Of Jack Parsons



Synopsis

Jack Parsons was a brilliant scientist whose innovations in solid rocket fuel were responsible for Allied air victories in WWII as well as early advances in space flight. A cofounder of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory and the California Institute of Technology, he was honored by NASA for his accomplishments when they named a moon crater after him. But outside the laboratory, Parsons immersed himself in a shadowy world unknown to his professional colleagues -- a world where Parsons practiced occult rituals with his mentor, Aleister Crowley, a self-professed Antichrist. When Parsons befriended L. Ron Hubbard, who later ran off with Parsons's money and his wife, his life became even more peculiar. Ultimately, his increasingly obsessive experiments -- he aimed to create a creature with magical powers -- sparked a chemical explosion that killed him.

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Customer Reviews

Scientist, poet, and self-proclaimed Antichrist, Jack Parsons was a bizarre genius whose life reads like an implausible yet irresistible science fiction novel. *Sex and Rockets* looks at his short life and dual career as cofounder of Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) and leader of the Agape Lodge of Aleister Crowley's Ordo Templi Orientis (OTO). Author John Carter scours primary documents and interviews surviving friends and contemporaries to deliver an intriguing portrait of a dreamy, driven man equally interested in rocketry and magick. From his early childhood and deep attachment to his mother (who killed herself hours after he died) through his nonacademic research and brilliant innovations in solid fuels to his mysterious 1952 demise in a garage-laboratory explosion at the age

of 37, the reader gets the impression of a man whose obsession with explosives and propellants was nearly single-minded. Yet this same man found spiritual fulfillment through Crowley's Law of Thelema, conducted magickal operations with L. Ron Hubbard, and signed an oath asserting himself to be the Antichrist--clearly Parsons wasn't a boring guy in a white coat. Carter pulls off the difficult task of integrating Parsons's disparate drives into one compelling story; though there are some rough spots and awkward transitions, one gets the sense that this illuminates the man's life better than a smooth, flawless work would. Robert Anton Wilson's introduction is smart and funny as always, initiating the uninformed into the basics of Crowleyanity while placing Parsons in the context of his times. While it might not be possible to read universal themes into Parsons's life, *Sex and Rockets* is an excellent study of a passionate life fully lived. --Rob Lightner

I'd heard a lot about Jack Parsons, or Jim Parsons, or Marvel Parson's depending on who is writing about Jack and in what context they are writing about him. The introduction by Robert Anton Wilson was very interesting as was most of the book. I come at this book as a Christian hobbyist researcher on the occult so I will take away different things than perhaps others who will read this book will. To be honest I was a bit disappointed by this book as it is hyped in some circles and for me it didn't live up to the hype fully, but as to telling us some about the life and times of Jack Parsons the book did a decent job of covering both Jack's occultic life and his contributions to American solid fueled rocketry. Jack's two hats as an occultist and as a scientist make him an interesting figure to many. This book gives you a good survey on Jack's involvement in both. In the end Jack Parsons was a flawed human being and his flaws lead him into a bizarre lifestyle that put him in company of Aleister Crowley (by correspondence), L. R. Hubbard (founder of Scientology), and scientific greats like Von Kármán. In the end Jack played with things both in the spiritual world and in the physical world that lead to his early destruction. Yet you can't help sympathizing with the guy on some levels as he comes off as over naive and trusting to only get taken advantage of and crushed a few times, but up till his early death he keeps rising from his failures to pursue greatness in another avenue and he never gave up. That and Jack's willingness to not take the world at face value were commendable. As to the book over all I really enjoyed the beginning but it got a little tedious towards the end.

Jack Parsons was an incredible genius and gifted young trailblazer in the research and development of Rocket engines. And even though Parsons was a non-academician, he had a brilliantly gifted mind. He could think outside the box and this made him take Rocket engines from

their infancy into their more mature stages of development. The author, John Carter, does an exemplary narrative job presenting this side of Parsons genius as well as his darker side (the Shadow Archetype) , that was entangled in the quest for Magick Powers. I highly recommend this book to the more mature readers, who want to understand how a mixture of ambition, lust and talent in both science and mysticism, brought about a marvelous transformation -- the birth of the "Space Age" and the Jet Propulsion Laboratories or JPL (which made the "Space Shuttle" a reality.

This book manages to take a fascinating subject--a key rocket scientist who was into the occult--and turn it into a dull read. I'd be okay with that were it an academic treatises but it isn't. Not a good book; it's just okay.

Disappointing. I was super excited to read it, but it spent much more time on ritualistic stuff about Freemasons than it did on JPL -- perhaps I had unrealistic expectations.

A well-researched biography. My one knock on it is that it relies too much on excerpts from other sources.

JPL - Jack Parsons' Lab. You can't make this stuff up.

VERY CREEPY BOOK ABOUT A CREEPY MAN....

A lifeless pro forma biography.

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