

Jack Parsons &

The Curious Origins of the American Space Program

by The Magician

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Part 1: Hermes, the Ontological Detective

I first heard about Jack Parsons from a fellow named Homer Nilmot, back in Philadelphia, around 1987. That was the time of my aborted attempt to get out of stock broking and make a living as a private detective. I can't tell you who Homer Nilmot was, or what I did for him, but I can tell you what I found out about Jack Parsons. All the sources here are real. Look them up for yourself. But be forewarned that your view of how the world works may never be the same again. Mine hasn't been.

Homer Nilmot was holding the folder close to his chest, as though fearful I might make a grab for it. The label read "Pasadena".

"Mythological control," he said. "The myth makes the man. Lyndon Johnson used to say about that old windbag Hubert Humphrey, 'I've got his pecker in my pocket.' Well you get hold their mixed-up little minds and you've got their peckers and a lot more."

We were setting at an open air table at Downey's at the end of South Street in Philadelphia. He had been rambling for an hour, feeling me out or perhaps just putting on a show. He would come to the point eventually.

I looked out across Front Street to the Delaware and the barge being towed up river. A jogger trotted past in the direction of the Ben Franklin Bridge.

"Them endorphin addicts can't ever get enough," he observed, nodding at the jogger.

"How'd you vote, last election," he added as an afterthought.

"I voted for Clint Eastwood."

"We didn't find any record you'd registered." He enunciated "registered" carefully, with hardly a trace of Texas accent.

"Clint didn't run, last election."

"You a Republican, Democrat, Shi`ite on a Shingle, what?"

Fair enough. It was his money. He could ask what he wanted and I would prevaricate when necessary. I assumed he already knew the answers to the questions he was asking. He was just measuring my responses against what he already knew.

"I'm a Sunni in a Subaru," I said. "I'm a libertarian. I don't think it's any of the government's business how I spend my money or who I go to bed with. The first makes liberals apoplectic and the other raises self-righteous indignation in neo-conservatives. I say a pox on both their Houses." And yours, too, I thought.

"You gonna vote for Russell Means and Ron Paul?"

I played along.

"Gorbochev says he's a Democrat. It doesn't mean he'll carry Chicago. The Libertarian Party has about as much to do with libertarianism as the president of Coca Cola has to do with the cocaine trade. The connection is at best historical and etymological, and there are differences in marketing."

I added: "Of course some people who snort the one also like to drink the other. Anyway Means and Paul aren't running together--they're competitors, at least until the party caucus. Paul was a Republican until recently."

"And Means was an Injun," he said.

"On the other hand, anyone who calls the IRS 'the Gestapo' has got my sympathetic attention."

He reflected on this. Then: "Ever hear of Jack Parsons?"

"Jack Parsons?"

"He and a feller named Theodore von Karman started the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena. You know, those Jupiter probes and all that."

"I've heard of von Karman," I said. "If the data doesn't fit your theory, take logs; and if that doesn't work, take log logs, and then the data will fit any theory whatsoever."

Homer looked at me suspiciously.

"Just something I read in grad school," I said. "Von Karmen said that, according to Granger and Morgenstern in a book about stock market prices. What about Parsons?"

"Parsons died in the 50s. We want you to find out who killed him."

"Parsons was murdered?"

"It was alleged an accident. We have reason to think differently. Here are some clippings about the death. You can read them later."

"Could I ask why?" I asked, taking the envelope.

"Why he was murdered? That's what you're to find out."

"Why you're interested in Jack Parsons."

"Maybe later. Now it's best if you just look without any prejudice."

It was the summer of '87 and if the End was nigh, it was not nigh enough to notice. The Seven Years of Plenty were symbolized by Merrill Lynch's theriomorphic Sarapis. The country was high on money, congressional soap operas, and impending doom. The Apocalypse heralded by books like *The Great Depression of 1990* and *Blood in the Streets* made all the sweeter the preceding spasm, the Twentieth Century's last great money-making opportunity. In accordance with Elliot Wave V, an exuberant public mood was lifting stock prices and women's skirts.

Or at least that's what I had said in my last report. It was a study for an investment bank on the correlation between stock market prices and trends in popular culture. A golden opportunity for theriomorphic bullshit.

I strolled up South Street on the way back to the office. The designer punk mirrored the cracks in the Zeitgeist. It was a rebellion of nostalgia. The Beatles, a bull market band, were back in vogue. Aging yuppies saw a new puberty, but now with cash to follow their noses. I had just read an article written for *Rolling Stone* by P.J. O'Rourke, the famed author of "How to Drive Fast on Drugs While Getting Your Wing-Wang Squeezed and Not Spill Your Drink." He was sufficiently smitten by *deja vu* to recommend LSD: Let the Sixties Die. To an ontological detective like myself, it seemed he had nothing to fear. It was the death of the Eighties that worried me.

My office was located in a renovated girl's school on Christian Street. It was non-obtrusive, inexpensive, with plenty of room for files. Anyway I never met clients

there. The electronic gate was intended to prevent car theft, but it kept visitors out too.

Sheri, my assistant, was reading a book. Sheri was a member of the Church of the SubGenius, and had a picture of "Bob", tacked to the wall behind her. Bob was smiling with his customary pipe clenched between his teeth. There was also a poster advertising "Gimme Slack," the recent hit single by Doktors for Bob. Sheri was devoted to frop, which she discreetly kept out of sight, in the lower left-hand desk drawer.

"Herm, listen to this," she said. "This was the most popular book in America before the American Revolution. You'll enjoy this. Here is a description of some of those who get smashed by the Prince of Peace, when he returns one day, all unexpectedly." She quoted:

Adulterers and Whoremongers
were there, with all unchast;
There Covetous and Ravenous,
that riches got too fast:
Who us'd vile ways themselves to raise
t'Estates and worldly wealth,
Oppression by or knavery,
by force, or fraud, or stealth.

"No corporate raiders in the Kingdom?" I asked.

"Nor much of anyone else," Sheri said. "Listen to these virtuous types:

Then were brought nigh a Company
of Civil honest Men,
That lov'd true dealing and hated stealing,
ne'er wrong'd their Bretheren;
Who pleaded thus: "Thou knowest us
that we were blameless livers; ...

"Our way was fair, our dealing square,
we were no wasteful spenders,
No lewd toss-pots, no drunken sots,

no scandalous offenders."

"Sound like fine Philadelphians to me. Not your average lewd toss-pots. I would guess a Caribbean Island, a legion of angels, and a long vacation for each, not to mention blessedness and glory."

"Wrong, Hermes," she said. "They get cast into Hell along with the others. They had the wrong attitude. They were just noble because they wanted a reputation for virtue and honesty. It was all an ego trip."

"Hard man, that Jesus. If this was the most popular book around at the time of the Revolution, it makes you wonder how business ever became the business of America, much less how we arose out of the swamp to sign the Bill of Rights."

"The Founding Fathers were mostly Deists," Sheri said, shifting to professorial mode. "They didn't believe in this God's Wrath nonsense. They thought religion was something naturally inborn, which made them oppose crimes committed in the name of God, Revelation, or the Church. Tom Jefferson and his free-thinking dinners. "

Sheri paused to grin at her own little speech. "Makes you proud to be an American," she laughed.

The book was entitled *The Day of Doom: or, A Poetical Description of the Great and Last Judgement, with a Short Discourse About Eternity*, by one Michael Wigglesworth of Harvard University. It was first published in 1662.

"It would seem Wigglesworth was playing the classic guilt game," I suggested. "If you cheat, your methods are evil; and if you're honest, your attitude is evil. Everything you do is wrong. You are inherently defective and you had better do what the guru says."

"Yeah, these cults are all alike," Sheri said. "They want

to wash your brain with a filthy Brillo pad. Speaking of which, two pink boys were here earlier. They wanted to ask you some questions. They looked like Xist Agents to me, but were dressed somewhat better than that."

Sheri called all government employees Xist Agents. "They got through the gate?" I asked. The only door to the office opened directly into the parking lot with its surrounding fence.

"They followed someone in. Or maybe they flew in by phantom helicopter. They could have been the three Men in Black, except there were only two of them. One of them was a fat little fellow. Greasy black hair, smooth talker. The other was medium build, skinny face, pasty, like he had just climbed out of a cemetery. I told them you had gone to New York on business, and would be back in a week. I didn't know what hotel. You never tell me anything. They left a number for you to call."

I took the phone number and went into my office. The first thing I wanted to do was read the clippings on Jack Parsons that Homer Nilmot had given me. I leaned back in my chair, put my feet on the desk, and looked out the window. The construction debris across the street didn't keep my attention for long, so I opened up the envelope.

The first article was from the late news edition of the *Los Angeles Times*, Wednesday, June 18, 1952. The banner headline on the front page read:

ROCKET SCIENTIST KILLED
IN PASADENA EXPLOSION

Tragedy Drives His
Mother to Suicide

Cripple Is
Helpless
Eyewitness

A brilliant Pasadena rocket propulsion expert met death in an explosion that ripped his garage laboratory yesterday and as a tragic aftermath his mother committed suicide by taking sleeping pills while an elderly crippled woman watched helplessly.

John W. Parsons, 31, former Caltech scientist and instructor and one of the founders of the school's famed Arroyo Seco jet propulsion laboratory, was killed when two explosions, which occurred almost simultaneously, demolished the laboratory on the grounds of the former Busch estate at 1071 S. Orange Grove Ave., Pasadena.

Parson's mother, Mrs. Ruth Virginia Parsons, 58, of 21 W. Glenarm St., Pasadena, took 45 pills after she was notified of her son's death at the Huntington Memorial Hospital about an hour after the explosion. The two women were in a home at 424 Arroyo Terrace, Pasadena, at the time.

Her elderly friend, Mrs. Helen Rowan, a cripple confined to a chair, saw the woman take the pills from a bottle left on a table after she had taken two capsules on order of a physician. Moments later, another friend, Mrs. Neilie Smith, a nurse, arrived at the home to console Mrs. Parsons in her bereavement. She found her slumped in a chair in the living room and Mrs. Rowan sitting helplessly nearby. Three pills were left in the bottle.

Mrs. Nedra Kibart, 59, of 320 Waverly Drive, Pasadena was in another room of the house at the time Mrs. Parsons took the bottle in her hands and began taking

the capsules. The mother of the chemist had told Mrs. Kibart that she 'couldn't stand it anymore' and that she would 'kill herself,' according to Pasadena Police Lt. John C. Elliot.

He said Mrs. Rowan lived with Mrs. Parsons at the W. Glenarm St. address.

Parsons was recognized as one of the foremost authorities on rocket propulsion since leaving Caltech in 1946. He had been employed as a consultant by many firms, his brother-in-law Robert Cameron, 28, of 125 N. Rampart Blvd., told newsmen. Parsons and Dr. Theodore Von Karman had founded the Caltech jet laboratory in the Arroyo Seco.

The explosives expert was preparing for a trip to Mexico on a job assignment, the nature of which was very secretive, Cameron said. Parsons was last employed by the Burmite Powder Co. in Saugus.

Parsons was apparently packing bottled explosives in a box to take with him on the trip today when the explosion occurred. It was followed immediately by a second and larger explosion, setting off other explosives stored in the room, according to Lt. Elliot.

Remnants of bottles marked "Explosives!" were found on the floor. Walls, doors, partitions, the ceiling and floor of the garage were demolished and a bathtub was toppled over. The body of Parsons was found lying near the tub.

The death of Mrs. Parsons was reported at 9.06 p.m. almost four hours after the

explosion shattered the made-over garage. Dr. J. H. Huntsman pronounced her dead. He had been summoned by Mrs. Smith, the nurse.

Four tenants residing in the building above the garage laboratory were uninjured but were routed from their apartments. Salvatori Ganci, an artist who occupies the unit directly above the laboratory, said the blast ripped a large hole in the floor and broke a leg of his grand piano.

Army ordinance experts from Ft. McArthur were called to the scene by Pasadena Police to inspect the debris and to determine the cause of the blast. They were also to inspect Parsons' temporary residence at 424 Arroyo Seco, home of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Carpenter, who were out of town, for any additional explosives stored there.

The building which contained the garage was at one time a servants quarters for the estate and recently had been converted to a multiple unit.

The bodies of Parsons and his mother were taken to the Turner-Stevens Mortuary pending funeral arrangements.

I mentally reviewed what I had just read. Parsons was an expert on rocket propulsion. He was active during and immediately after the Second World War. He had had a position at Caltech and was a founder of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory. He had been working as a consultant for the Burmite Powder Co., according to his brother-in-law.

Brother-in-law. No quote from his wife. Where was

she? Parsons was preparing to make a trip to Mexico. On a "secretive" job assignment. Parsons had stored explosives in his garage. Would an explosives expert do that? An explosion had killed Parsons and demolished the garage, but had not done major damage to the apartment above. The explosion had occurred in two parts. A small explosion had apparently ignited other explosives.

By some unknown sequence of events Parsons had been delivered to Huntington Memorial Hospital and had been pronounced dead. Parsons was unexpectedly young, only 31. Most of the article was about Parsons mother. She heard the news, took a bottle of sleeping pills, and died while a crippled friend watched. Both deaths had occurred Tuesday, June 17.

The article had been written hurriedly. Von Karman's name was misspelled. There were no quotes from Parsons' colleagues or employers. No quotes from CalTech or JPL or the Army Ordinance Experts.

The second clipping was the next day's follow-up article, on Thursday, June 19. Parsons' age had increased by six years, and "Burmite" had become Bermite.

Scientist's Fatal Blast Explained

Police theorized last night that the explosion which took the life of John W. Parsons, 37-year old rocket and jet-propulsion expert, in his Pasadena laboratory Tuesday resulted from his dropping a can of fulminate of mercury.

Pasadena Police Chemist Don M. Harding, completing his examination of the remnants of the blast, said it was definitely established that the fulminate of mercury, a sensitive explosive used

only as a detonator, was set off by a shock at floor level.

Harding said the quantity of fulminate of mercury could not be determined but he reported that the coffee can in which Parsons apparently was mixing the batch was shredded into shrapnel. There was a large quantity of other types of explosives in the laboratory, many of an experimental nature, Harding said.

Police said it had been reported that Parsons was manufacturing small quantities of the fulminate of mercury for commercial purposes.

The blast on the grounds of the former F. G. Crickshank estate at 1071 S. Orange Grove Ave., Pasadena, shattered the garage laboratory and inflicted injuries on Parsons that caused his death an hour later.

The scientist's mother, Mrs. Ruth Virginia Parsons, 58, of 21 W. Glenarm St., Pasadena, swallowed 45 sleeping pills and died after hearing of the tragedy.

Parsons was identified as one of the nation's leading authorities on explosives and jet propulsion. With five other original shareholders, he founded Aerojet Engineering Corp. in 1942, but sold out his interest three years later.

'He was a loner,' recalled T.E. Reehan, secretary-treasurer of Aerojet. 'He liked to wander. But he was one of the top men in the field.'

Many of the basic patents for JATO (jet

assisted take-off) were obtained under Parsons' name. While a vice-president of Aerojet he headed the solid propellant development project. Associates said he was not known to have done any work on atomic power.

Parsons had been with the Bermite Powder Co. of Saugus for a year until last Friday, when he left intending to go to Mexico. There, he told associates, he intended to do further research with explosives and miniature special effects for motion pictures.

At the Saugus firm Parsons headed one of the rocket propellant detonation and pyrotechnic short interval delay projects, a confidential research and development project.

'He stayed until Friday to finish his project,' said J.H. Arnold, treasurer and superintendant of Bermite. 'I tried to get him to stay for the tests, but he was anxious to get to Mexico. He had been working hard.'

Parsons was extremely safety conscious, Arnold said. He worked carefully, had a thorough knowledge of his job and was scrupulously neat, the superintendent recalled.

Arnold was surprised that Parsons had explosives in the small make-shift laboratory near his home--a violation of the Pasadena fire-ordinance. The superintendent said, however, that Parsons had a powder magazine near Rialto and six or eight months ago had planned to go into the dynamite business.

Harding said enough explosives remained in the laboratory to 'blow up half the block'.

The explosives had been stored there for six months or longer, police learned.

Examination of the blast scene disclosed that the explosion was concentrated in a small area. Apparently Parsons received the full, terrible force directly against his body. A hole was blown through the floor directly under the section upon which Parsons presumably was standing.

The blast broke windows in an adjoining estate, owned by W.W. Burris. Martin Foshaug, his mother, Mrs. Alta Foshaug, Sal Ganci, an artist, and Jo Anne Price, a model were on the second floor of the converted barn at the time of the explosion.

'Everything fell off the walls,' Ganci said. 'The piano was knocked over, its leg broken. We were staggered.'

Ganci said he had expected 'something to happen' as a result of Parsons' preoccupation with explosives. The chemist frequently warned neighbors that his experimental materials were unstable.

Harding was so skeptical of the chemicals left he shielded them from flash bulbs as photographers took pictures.

I skimmed some irrelevances. Then:

Parsons, it was disclosed, attained his eminence as an explosives expert principally by self-training. Born here, he

was graduated from high school but took only two years of night study at SC.

Although Parsons had no formal degree he went from SC to Caltech as a research associate in astronautics and with Dr. Theodore von Karman founded the Caltech jet laboratory.

He was a member of the American Chemical Society, the Institute of Aeronautical Science, the Army Ordnance Association and Sigma Xi fraternity. He had refused a number of honorary degrees.

Well, anyway you looked at it, Parsons was a remarkable individual. He had become a research associate at Caltech without formal training, established himself as one of the foremost experts on jet propulsion, co-founded the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, and had also been a founder of Aerojet. He had made his own way from nowhere to the top of his field. It was not surprising to find he was a loner.

The newsmen's curiosity had been easily satisfied. There were many unanswered questions. Parsons was described by a co-worker as careful and scrupulously neat, yet he had stored explosives for six months in a building with four upstairs tenants. Was this uncharacteristic carelessness?

The four tenants who lived in the top floor of the converted garage/barn were apparently aware of Parsons' laboratory below, yet were content to remain where they were. There were supposedly enough explosives left in the lab to 'blow up half the block.' Was this just police hype? The blast that did occur managed to destroy the floor, ceiling, walls, and door of the lab without setting the other explosives off. There also was a conflict with the first article, in which a police lieutenant had described two explosions. Now,

according to the second article, there was a single blast from the dropped fulminate of mercury.

Again there were no quotes from Parsons' wife or colleagues at JPL or Caltech. Just brief comments from the company officials at Aerojet and Bermite. Where were the characteristic expressions of grief and admiration for a departed co-worker?

Why did Parsons need to go to Mexico to do further explosives research? What was special about Mexico? Or was the "trip" a cover story to account for time that would be spent elsewhere?

These questions were thirty-five years late. Homer Nilmot needed a professional historian, not a detective. But I had known that from the start, and it hadn't prevented me from taking the project. Necessity is the mother of pretension.

I went over to the sink in the corner of my office and poured some espresso beans into the coffee grinder. I put fresh water into the kettle and turned on the hot plate.

It felt good to have a client. Homer was my second. The first had enabled me to rent the office, such as it was.

Most of the wall space was covered with bookshelves. Filing cabinets filled the interior. It was a loose-leaf compendium of American fringe beliefs. The collection had started as a hobby, arising from a general preoccupation with what people believed and why they believed it. Political beliefs, scientific beliefs, religious beliefs, economic beliefs--these were now my stock in trade. Long ago I had come to the conclusion that the outliers in the data, the odd items that didn't appear to fit, were the ones that told the real story.

At the moment Sheri was in the outer office combing the ads in obscure publications in search of new material. I had hired her because she was already a

walking encyclopedia in certain areas, and she seemed reasonably happy to do the job at not very much pay.

I ground the beans into a fine powder, dumped the black dust into the strainer, and poured in hot water. After a minute I pressed out the grounds, transferred the liquid to a mug labelled Personal Paradigms Inc., and added some half-and-half. When coffee-drinking had arrived in Europe in the seventeenth century, the Catholic Church had dubbed the black brew an evil drug. A prince of Waldeck offered ten thalers to anyone who denounced a coffee drinker. By contrast, Johann Sebastian Bach, the notorious drug pusher and author of the Coffee Cantata, had written: "Coffee, coffee, how I love its flavor, and if you would win my favor, yes! yes! let me have coffee, let me have my coffee strong." I was decidedly in the Bachian camp on this issue. Just Say No to weak coffee.

Under the influence of fresh caffeine, I turned to the last clipping. From the *Los Angeles Times* two days later, Saturday June 21:

Mystery Angel Enters
Scientist Death Blast

Prober's Advance Belief 'Someone Else'
Handled Waste in Parsons' Laboratory

Evidence of the careless handling of dangerous explosive waste materials at the scene of last Tuesday's fatal Pasadena explosion yesterday was described by a former associate as completely 'out of character' with the scientific background of John W. Parsons, 37, who was killed by the blast.

George W. Santmyers, Los Angeles
chemical engineer associated with
Parsons in a Naval Ordnance Department

research project since Jan. 1 said that from the evidence gathered at the scene, 1071 S. Orange Grove Ave., he would conclude that `someone else' had put quantities of explosive refuse into exposed trash and garbage containers in the rear of the Pasadena scientist's laboratory.

Don Harding, Pasadena police criminologist reported finding in the trash can six filter papers containing inflammable residue of fulminate of mercury. This is believed to have been the explosive that took Parsons' life.

The cans, mixed with a content of beer tins and kitchen refuse, were nearly collected by Pasadena rubbish trucks. In addition to the filter papers, Harding also found some 500 grams of cordite, an ammunition compound.

`For Parsons to have disposed of such materials in that manner,' Santmyers said, `would be in the same category as a highly skilled surgeon to operate with dirty hands. And I knew Parsons as an exceptionally cautious and brilliant scientific researcher.'

The article went on to say that Parsons would not have tried to hastily dispose of such material at the last minute before his trip, nor would he carry such a hazardous primer in an automobile. Then:

At the time of his death, Parsons was definitely on the trail of a completely new explosive substance `far superior to any existing commercial blasting material,' Santmyers told police. . . .

Rumors that Parsons had been involved in mystic cults some years ago were discounted by Santmyers.

Curiouser and curiouser. If Parsons was involved in classified work, it would explain some of the information gaps in the first reports. Facts would be withheld because government secrets were involved.

It could also be a PR job. If Parsons had embarrassed the government and his colleagues by sloppy handling of explosives, the introduction of a 'mystery angel' would allow government personnel to save face and maintain the image of scientific impeccability. And the story would hold up if federal investigators had squeezed out the Pasadena police under the guise of official secrecy.

On the other hand, Homer Nilmot thought Parsons had been murdered. Who would have had a motive to kill Parsons? I knew where to start and why Homer had hired me.

I re-read the last line. *Rumors of mystic cults discounted*. Right. I called Sheri.

"We have anything on Jack Parsons? He was a jet propulsion expert in Pasadena who was killed in an explosion in his garage laboratory in the early 50s. He was a member of some cult or another."

Sheri thought for a moment. "He was a member of Aleister Crowley's Ordo Templi Orientis. I don't know anything about him, but I have definitely heard or read the name in that connection."

Crowley. I knew a little about Aleister Crowley. He was an English occultist and magician. A Cambridge graduate. He had claimed to put magic on a scientific basis. This was magic in the anthropological sense, not in the stage show sense. Real Magick. He spelled it with a *k*, magick. I recalled that he also been given a

channeled revelation, *The Book of the Law*, in the early part of the century. Some journalist had called him the "wickedest man alive". That had been a piece of journalistic sensationalism, as I recalled, but Crowley was certainly controversial. It would be enough to make Santmyers discount rumors of Parsons' involvement in mystic cults.

"Here's what we need," I told Sheri. "We need anything we have on Crowley that might tell what was going on in California, particularly Pasadena. We also need other sources of information on Parsons. Go over to the University of Penn library and see if you can find anything on the history of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory or early rocket research at Cal Tech. Look up material on von Karman--there ought to be some references to Parsons.

"Also," I added, "we want to find out if Crowley had any involvement with intelligence organizations. I doubt that Homer Nilmot is paying money just out of intellectual curiosity about the early history of rocketry."

After Sheri had left, on impulse I pulled out the *Encyclopedia Britannica* and looked up Aleister Crowley. There was a two-word entry. "20th-century satanist," it said. Well. You could always count on the *Encyclopedia Britannica* for in-depth research and scholarly impartiality. Satanism (whatever that was) was a standard term of abuse applied by certain groups to anyone who disagreed with their religious beliefs. Some Protestants called Catholics satanists. Some Catholics called Masons satanists. Some termed satanic the adherents of the Moon Goddess or of other nature religions. The encyclopedia might as well have described Jesus as a "1st-century blasphemer" based on the gossip of the Sanhedrin.

Or maybe Crowley was really some sort of satanist. In Philadelphia satanists were rebellious teenagers from religious homes, who tattooed "666" on their bodies and sacrificed small animals. Which reminded me of the

two Men in Black.

I looked at the phone number left behind by Sheri's afternoon visitors. It was Center City. When I punched in the number, I heard a ring, a click, then a further ring with a different tone. Then the line went dead.

I hung up and took a sip of coffee. The phone rang.

"Personal Paradigms," I answered.

"We know," a voice said. "Good afternoon, Mr. Paradigms," said a second voice.

"May I help you?"

"Yes," said the first voice. "Oh, that's very good. He wants to help us," said the second.

The first voice continued: "We understand you are interested in Jack Parsons, Mr. Paradigms. Is this true?"

"Not at all," I said.

"That's good. That's very good," said the second voice.

"Jack Parsons was the cause of much trouble for a lot of people recently, Mr. Paradigms. But it's settled down now. We wouldn't want anyone mixing the pot."

"Stirring the cauldron," the second voice corrected. "Rejuvenating the remains. Roiling the ruckus."

"Why do you care?" I asked.

"We care."

"We are very caring people," the second voice said.

"Who do you work for?"

"Let's just say we work for the government." Voice No. 1.

"We represent a government agency." Voice No. 2.

"You will not have heard of us. We keep a low profile." No. 1.

Laughter. No. 2: "That's very good. We keep a low profile with our high foreheads." More laughter.

The line went dead.

I took another sip of coffee.

* * *

Leaving the office, Sheri was a blur of motion. She always felt that if she could only move fast enough, the world would spin out behind her like a treadmill. She had the key in the switch of the Volvo while still closing the door with her left hand, started the electronic gate on its ponderous rise while sliding out of the parking space in a deft parabola, then shot through the opening with barely an inch to spare. She turned right in the direction of Lombard.

Holy Crowley schmowley. She checked her watch. It was 2:32. She decided she would stop at Harvest, by the Stock Exchange, on her way over to campus. Frank would likely be there in a few minutes. Like some of the other foreign currency options traders, he liked to pop up for a beer right after the close. Frank had told her about a psych professor he had had who was into Crowley.

From 22nd Street Sheri cut back down Market toward the Exchange and slid into a parkplatz on the street as a car pulled out. The driver in a second car waiting to back into the same space stuck his head out the window. "You bitch!" he yelled. Sheri flashed him a smile as she put a quarter in the meter. She entered the

Exchange building on the 20th Street side, walked through the atrium past the Exchange entrance, and into Harvest.

Frank wasn't there, so she sat down and ordered two beers. She was nearly finished with hers before Frank came in with some other traders. Sheri waved him over.

"Ola, mi chulo. Your beer is waiting. I see you can use one. Tell me about it."

"I was getting blown out of the water all day by the Swiss franc." Frank took a seat and downed half the beer. "In the morning I was delta neutral, fully hedged you know, intending just to buy and sell a few and suck out the spread. But then the Swiss started to rally. It ran up a hundred points and I was sitting on negative gamma so I kept buying spot to stay hedged. I was losing money all the way up. And then it turned around and dropped two hundred points. My position kept getting longer the more it dropped, so now I had to sell back in the interbank market all the spot I had just bought, at a position loss at that because you couldn't keep the option prices in line. Everyone was yelling and shoving and I had a splitting headache. I went back in the restroom for some energy, but I was so shook up I spilled most of the coke on the floor. I wasn't gone more than a few minutes, but when I came back the Swiss had rallied almost seven-five points, and Kinsky was yelling at me where the fuck had I been. We took a good hit and he acts like firing me. And the Swissie closed unchanged.

"It wasn't a good day," he concluded.

Sheri nodded sympathetically. "Negative gamma can do that to you." She wondered what it was.

"You can say that again," Frank agreed. He was off in his own world, staring out at pedestrians on 19th.

She leaned forward and ran her fingers lightly along the

inside of his left thigh. "Been getting any lately, Frank?"

"What?" His eyes swung to her and jerked abruptly back into focus.

"Remind me who that psychology professor was you had at Penn. The one who you said was into occult and magical groups."

"Wilson. David Wilson. Yeah. What about him?"

"You were telling me about an exchange in class one day. He was talking about Aleister Crowley."

"Crowley. Yeah. Wilson gave us a reading assignment in this book about the psychology of possession. I think it was saying that people, like holy rollers, who go into a trance and speak in tongues, or you know voodoo rituals that use music and drugs, or people who have certain terrifying experiences in war. There was a common psychology in all these."

"The psychology of sex, drugs, and rock-and-roll?"

"Something like that, I guess. Anyway one day he was talking about Crowley. I think he knew some students on campus who thought Crowley was hot shit. Crowley said something about doing your own thing ... "

"Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law," Sheri prompted.

"Yeah. He was saying they seemed to think it meant doing whatever the hell they wanted to."

"What did he think it meant?"

"He said Crowley meant you should find the one thing you really wanted to do in life, and to do that. Find your true will. Don't try to be a frigging accountant when you're really a guitar player at heart. There was this guy

that was asking him a number of hostile questions. Someone told me after class that he--this guy--was a member of a magical group. I don't really know if he was or not."

Frank looked out the window. Once again lost in thought.

"Thanks, Frank. Got to go. Listen, call me some time. We've got to stop meeting like this."

"Yeah." He turned momentarily to watch her leave. Strange girl, he thought, but fun. Sort of like foreign currency options. The puzzle was half the pleasure.

* * *

Sheri returned around six with a few items from the library. She said there was a psychology professor at Penn named David Wilson who had the reputation of being something of a Crowley expert.

I called his office but he had left for the day. I decided to do the same.

On the way out I picked up *The Day of Doom* from Sheri's desk and paged through it. It was filled with family values:

"The godly Wife conceives no grief,
nor can she shed a tear
For the sad state of her dear Mate,
when she his doom doth hear. . . .

The pious Father had now much rather
his graceless Son should lie
In Hell with Devils, for all his evils,
burning eternally,
Than God most High should injury
by sparing him sustain;
And doth rejoice to hear Christ's voice,
adjudging him to pain."

"Damned sinners deserve no pity," I said to Sheri.

"Amnesty International can't help you in Hell," she replied.

(to be continued)

The Magician is the author of other episodes of the Jack Parsons story (<http://zolatimes.com/jparart/Aparmenu.html>).

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Jack Parsons &

The Curious Origins of the American Space Program

by The Magician

Part 2: The Suicide Club Gives Birth to Both the U.S. and Chinese Missile Programs

I arrived back at the apartment too late to catch the nightly news soap opera with Dan, Tom, McLehrer, and Peter. I opened a Dos XX and selected some CDs. The Hooters and Pink Floyd.

My two cats didn't like the music. They scowled and left for another room.

I started in on the stack of materials Sheri had left me.

"Guess what," Sheri had said. "The project Jack Parsons was involved in at Cal Tech was called the GALCIT Rocket Research Project. It became the Jet Propulsion Laboratory. I found two histories of the program--one written in 1940 and one in 1954. You'll be especially surprised at what you find in the later one."

I sifted through the pile. The earlier pamphlet was entitled "The Daniel Guggenheim Graduate School of Aeronautics of the California Institute of Technology: A History of the First Ten Years," *Bulletin of the California Institute of Technology*, Vol. 49, No. 2, Pasadena, Calif., May, 1940.

It said the GALCIT Rocket Research Project had begun in 1936 at the private initiative of a group composed of Frank Malina, Hsue-Shen Tsien, A.M.O. Smith, John W. Parsons, Edward S. Forman, and Weld Arnold.

Weld Arnold had financed the group with a \$1,000 donation. The group seemed to revolve around Malina, Parsons, and Forman.

"The problem of rocket motor design, based on the theory of perfect gases, was discussed by F.J.Malina. J. W.Parsons and E.S.Forman made an experimental study of the fast-burning powder rocket motor. The practicability of various substances as propellants for jet propulsion was investigated by J.W. Parsons."

So Parsons was the fuel expert. The experimenter. The kid who mixed the powder and turned jet propulsion into reality. I checked the references. There were two papers by Parsons listed, one published, one unpublished: "Experiments with Powder Motors for Rocket Propulsion by Successive Impulses," with Edward Forman, in *Astronautics*, No. 43 (1939), 4; and "A Consideration of the Practicality of Various Substances as Fuels for Jet Propulsion."

Returning to the history, I discovered there had been other reports "prepared for manufacturing concerns and government agencies by F.J.Malina, with the assistance of J.W.Parsons and E.S.Forman. These dealt with a general review of rocket propulsion and the possibility of application to heavier-than-air craft."

According to the history, the GALCIT program had recently (in 1940) been expanded under the sponsorship of the Committee of the National Academy of Sciences for Air Corps Research. The program was directed by Theodore von Karman, who was chairman of the subcommittee on jet propulsion. "The experimental part of the program is being carried out by F.J.Malina, J.W. Parsons, and E.S.Forman."

The second history was entitled *The Guggenheim Aeronautical Laboratory of the California Institute of Technology: The First Twenty-Five Years*, Cal Tech, Pasadena, June 1954.

In the text, Parsons was not mentioned by name. On the other hand, only a few people such as von Karman were. I turned to the list of research references and checked those against the papers from the earlier history. Seven references under "Rocket Research Project" were listed in the 10-year history. The same names and articles were listed in the 25-year history, except for papers by Jack Parsons and his co-author Edward Forman.

I looked again at the date.

June 1954.

Two years after his well-publicized death, a co-founder of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory had been excised from Cal Tech history.

It smelled of patricide. The academicians had had their revenge. Take the embarrassing fellow without the degree and bury him in the footnotes. Then delete the footnotes.

The twenty-five year history was sanitized in more ways than one. Its tired prose overlooked private initiative entirely and arrogantly gave the credit for research and progress in the field of early aeronautics to Cal Tech and the National Academy of Sciences. But the history was still helpful. It made clear that the original project had been absorbed by the military--the Army Air Force.

"Because of the possible application of rocket propulsion to assisted takeoff of aircraft, the Army Air Force became interested in the program and in 1941 took over sponsorship of the work. At this time the effort was organized and known as GALCIT Project No. 1

"By 1941 the scope of both theoretical and experimental work had been greatly extended. In August 1941, the first practical solid propellant had been developed, and

the first successful assisted-takeoff tests were made. The first rocket motors shortened takeoff distances of small aircraft by as much as 50 percent. After the development work was completed and the assisted-takeoff motors went into extensive service use, large-scale production was undertaken by the Aerojet Engineering Corporation, which was subsequently acquired by the General Tire and Rubber Company and has recently become the Aerojet-General Corporation. . . .

"In 1944 the first long-range rocket research and development program in the United States was started. By this time the size of the project had increased to a point where the organization of a separate laboratory seemed desirable. Accordingly, on November 1, 1944, the Project separated from the GALCIT and became known as the Jet Propulsion laboratory . . ."

So this was official history. The GALCIT project and Aerojet Engineering Corporation (of which Parsons was one of the founding shareholders) had become an important part of aerial warfare research during the Second World War. Later in the 1950s the Jet Propulsion Laboratory would be at the center of the race to space. It would seem no one cared to acknowledge the important entrepreneurial role played by a disciple of the unsavory Aleister Crowley. Why was that?

To do so might upset the conventional image of dispassionate progress that scientific bureaucrats liked to project. Many of the latter, I knew, had never had a creative thought in their lives, and resented anyone who did.

I decided to have another beer. I put on Duran Duran's Notorious and looked out the window down Second Street, which extended from the building below me. In the distance it turned into a thin ribbon of lights stretching endlessly to the south.

The only food I found in the kitchen was tuna I had

stocked for the cats. I made myself a tuna sandwich, and returned to the living room.

I looked to see what else Sheri had culled from the Van Pelt library. She had found Theodore von Karman's autobiography, *The Wind and Beyond*.

The introduction said von Karman had been chosen over all other living scientists to receive the first National Medal of Science from President John Kennedy in 1963. After skimming the first few pages, I checked the index and turned to the first reference to Jack Parsons. Von Karman said he had been sitting in his Cal Tech office one day, when three "young men" showed up wanting his help in building a space rocket. It was John W. Parsons, Frank J. Malina, and Edward S. Forman.

The three had already talked to some other Cal Tech staff members and "had been turned down because rocketry was not regarded as practical or even scientifically interesting."

Frank Malina was a graduate student in aeronautics at Cal Tech, and wanted to do a Ph.D. thesis on rocket propulsion. He had been told he would be better off getting a job in the aircraft industry. Parsons was a self-taught chemist "with considerable innate ability." Forman was a rocket engine tinkerer. According to von Karman, both Parsons and Forman had corresponded with the early German and Russian rocketeers, one of these being Willy Ley, the author of many books on rocket travel. Their back yards in Pasadena "were pockmarked from the effects of rocket explosions." Parsons and Forman had heard that Malina was working on rocket propulsion and had gone to him for advice. At the time "real scientific interest in rockets . . . was virtually nil."

The three wanted to build solid- and liquid-fuel rockets which could perhaps fly twenty to fifty miles into space. Von Karman thought the project worthwhile, because

instrumented rockets could bring back information about cosmic rays and weather at altitudes balloons wouldn't reach. So he gave Malina permission to do his doctoral thesis on rocket propulsion, and gave the group permission to use the Aeronautics Laboratory during off hours, even though Parsons and Forman had no formal connection with Cal Tech.

The Parsons-Forman-Malina group had money problems from the start. The only funds they got came from a student named Weld Arnold who gave them \$1,000 in return for becoming the group photographer.

After one rocket misfired inside the Aeronautics Laboratory, the group was moved outside to a concrete platform attached to the corner of the building. Another explosion buried a piece of gauge deep into the wall, and Cal Tech students started calling the group the Suicide Club. To prevent difficulties with the administration, von Karman decided to move the Suicide Club away from all buildings as far as possible. They found a spot in the Arroyo Seco in back of Devil's Gate Dam, on the western edge of Pasadena.

In May 1938 "Hap" Arnold, Chief of the Army Air Corps, visited the Club. He was interested in scientific applications to war, in particular to the possibility of some form of rocket- assisted takeoff for large bombers from small air fields, like those in the Pacific Islands. The group got a \$1,000 contract, and a year later one for \$10,000.

The success of jet-assisted takeoff was followed by experiments with long- range rockets. By 1945 JPL had launched America's first successful high-altitude rocket, the WAC Corporal, to a height of forty-seven miles. Later in 1949 at the White Sands Proving Ground in New Mexico, the WAC Corporal was launched from the nose of a reconstructed V-2 to a height of 244 miles.

It was the first American rocket to enter extraterrestrial space. Not a bad ending for a project that started with

two boys from Pasadena (Parsons and Foreman) with cratered backyards.

Paging through the book, I found a photo of Parsons. It was taken in January 1943 at the Muroc (now Edwards) Air Force Base in California. It was a photograph of the founding fathers and early directors of the Aerojet Engineering Corporation. The group was standing in front of the Douglas Havoc attack bomber (A-20), "the first U.S. airplane to take off with permanently installed rocket power plant". Parsons was standing between Theodore C. Coleman, the Director, and Edward S. Forman. Von Karman and Frank Malina were also in the photo, along with the A-20 pilot and some others.

I was surprised at Parsons' appearance. I suppose I had expected some wiry New Age vegetarian type or perhaps a nerdy looking intellectual. Parsons had rugged good looks with black, wavy hair. Like the others, he was squinting into the sun. He carried a serious, preoccupied expression.

Aerojet had been founded in 1942 by Parsons-Forman-Malina, along with von Karman, Andrew Haley, and Martin Summerfield. The purpose had been to sell JATO (jet-assisted takeoff) units to the armed forces. Each founding member had put up two hundred dollars. Von Karman said that what they lacked in business acumen, they made up in other ways. "Parsons, for instance, was an excellent chemist, and a delightful screwball. He loved to recite pagan poetry to the sky while stamping his feet. The son of a one-time tycoon, he stood six-foot-one, with dark wavy hair, a small mustache, and penetrating black eyes which appealed to the ladies."

When Parsons wasn't working with explosives, he was the head of a religious sect called the Thelemites, von Karman related. The latter met in Pasadena in a mansion in a room with walls of carved leather. Among other things they practiced sex rituals. Or so von Karman learned when the FBI questioned him about Parsons some time later. Von Karman described

Parsons' mentor Aleister Crowley as an "ex-mountain climber," and said Crowley's story was related in a book entitled *The Great Beast*.

Von Karman told what happened to Aerojet in a chapter entitled, "How I `Lost' \$12,000,000." In 1944 the company had desperately needed financing to finish some contracts with the Navy. Banks would not make loans for such an unstable enterprise as rocketry. After much soul-searching, the owners reluctantly tried to raise capital by offering half their stock to General Tire for \$225,000, which the group had decided was the fair value. General Tire countered with a stunningly low offer of \$50,000. Eventually in early 1945 the group, whose voting power was held in a trust under von Karman, sold the shares for \$75,000.

Later on General Tire wanted to completely buy out the minority shareholders, including von Karman and Malina, in order to consolidate Aerojet with the parent company. It offered to pay \$350 a share. Otherwise General Tire threatened to make a \$300 dividend. This would deplete Aerojet of assets, and would subject von Karman to heavy taxes. General Tire would also then convert the shares of Aerojet into shares of the combined company at an unfavorable ratio. Von Karman eventually agreed to sell. (Malina, by contrast, took the \$300 dividend anyway, converted his shares into those of Aerojet-General, and opened an art studio in Paris.) One of von Karman's friends later calculated that by selling out in 1953, von Karman had lost the opportunity to be worth \$12,000,000 in the 1960s.

Jack Parsons and Ed Forman followed a different path. Both men had dropped out of GALCIT to devote full time to Aerojet when the company was formed. Then in 1945 when the group as a whole sold half-interest to General Tire for \$75,000, the two of them made a separate agreement for the remainder of their Aerojet stock. Afterwards they apparently lost contact with JPL programs. Parsons, however, continued to work for other aerospace firms. Von Karman heard that in 1947 Parsons had become involved in arms for Israel. Some

years later the Mexican government asked Parsons to set up an explosives factory. Parsons told von Karman that the Mexicans were providing him with a seventeenth-century castle for living quarters. "But Parsons never entered it. While he was packing a trailer with explosives in front of his home, a bottle of fulminate of mercury slipped from his hand and exploded. A few hours later he died."

So this was the explanation of the "mysterious" trip to Mexico. Parsons was building an munitions factory.

Von Karman apparently took the conventional account of Parsons' death at face value. But his account had introduced a myriad of new possibilities relating to Parsons' death.

If Parsons had become involved in arms dealing, he could have been killed by a client or a competitor.

Von Karman noted that Parsons had continued to place his stamp on solid- fuel rocketry after leaving Aerojet. That might make him a threat to competing companies. Could Parsons' death be a simple, if extreme, case of industrial espionage?

Parsons was headed to Mexico to establish an explosives factory. Did someone have a reason to stop that enterprise?

Parsons was the head of a religious sect. Could he have been killed by a fanatic?

I looked at the clock. It was nearly 3:30 a.m. I decided to glance quickly at the other two books Sheri had supplied. One was entitled *JPL and the American Space Program*. It contained another picture of Parsons. Parsons, Malina, Forman, Smith and a student assistant named Rudolph Schott were relaxing in a sandy area of the Arroyo Seco. A rocket motor was in place, ready for testing. There were sandbags behind which the group sought safety during the tests.

Parsons looked quite young in the picture. Then the chronology stuck me. If Parsons died in 1952 at age thirty-seven, he was only twenty-one--the age of an undergraduate Junior--when he showed up in von Karman's office in 1936.

The history mentioned that before the GALCIT group had received the \$1,000 from Arnold in the Spring of 1937, Parsons and Frank Malina considered writing a movie script about a flight to the moon. They hoped to raise research funds by selling the script to Hollywood. (Malina himself had become interested in rockets at age twelve when he had read Jules Verne's *From the Earth to the Moon*.) Short of money a year later, Parsons and Ed Forman had taken jobs with the Halifax Powder Company in the Mojave Desert.

The JPL history also speculated on the origin of Parsons' solution to one problem with JATO rocket storage. The powder in the rockets deteriorated after only a few days, so that the rockets would explode instead of burning with a controlled thrust. It occurred to Parsons to replace the charcoal in the powder with paving asphalt. He replaced salt peter with potassium perchlorate as the oxidizer. One theory said Parsons got the idea while watching a roof being tarred. Malina, however, pointed out that Parsons was already familiar with Greek fire, an asphalt-based material used by the ancient Greeks to set ships ablaze from a distance.

The other book was entitled *The History of Rocket Technology*, and contained an article by Malina on the early days of GALCIT. It explained how it all got started. During 1936 the local Pasadena paper had carried an article about the possibility of rocket-powered aircraft. The story was based on a seminar given by William Bollay, a graduate assistant to von Karman, and reported some studies done in Vienna. Jack Parsons and Ed Forman had seen the article. They showed up at Cal Tech seeking help on their current project, the construction of a liquid-propellant rocket motor.

It was now 4:35 a.m., so I simply turned out the light. The two cats began a game of hide-and-seek in the darkened room.

As I lay on the couch, I kept thinking about two things I had read earlier in the Karman autobiography.

The first was that von Karman, a Hungarian Jew, was a descendant of a mathematician at the Imperial Court of Prague who had been given credit for creating the world's first mechanical robot, known as the Golem.

The other concerned Hsue-Shen Tsien, one of the original members of the GALCIT group with Parsons, Malina, and Forman. Von Karman considered Tsien one of his brightest students. Tsien had co-authored the paper with von Karman and Malina that led in 1944 to the ORDCIT project: a program to develop long-range jet-propelled missiles. The first prototype was the Private A, a missile powered by a solid-fuel rocket unit manufactured under the supervision of Jack Parsons at Aerojet. Aerojet would later provide a liquid-fuel rocket motor for the spectacularly successful WAC Corporal.

Tsien was thus a founding father of the U.S. missile program. In the 1960s Tsien was also credited with the successful establishment of the nuclear missile program of the People's Republic of China.

Tsien was a classic case of self-fulfilled reality on the part of the U.S. government. As a Chinese citizen, Tsien was accused of being a Communist spy during the McCarthy period because he refused to testify against a colleague. Tsien's security clearance was removed. Tsien said he couldn't work under those circumstances, and threatened to return to China if his clearance wasn't restored. He made the threat to the U.S. Under Secretary of the Navy, who was ultimately responsible for some of Tsien's projects at JPL. The Under Secretary panicked and had Tsien arrested by Immigration. The U.S. government subsequently refused to let Tsien leave the country for five years, by

which time he had no desire to stay. Ten years after leaving the U.S., Tsien had turned China into a missile power.

As I lay in the dark, hypnagogic images of Golem blended with missile- equipped Chinese Communists.

Eventually, however, my thoughts drifted back to a youthful group of friends and sunny afternoons in the Arroyo Seco. I fell asleep.

(to be continued)

The Magician is the author of other episodes of the Jack Parsons story (<http://zolatimes.com/jparart/Aparmenu.html>).

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Jack Parsons &

The Curious Origins of the American Space Program

by The Magician

Part 3: The Slaves Shall Serve

Sex rituals? I thought when I awoke the following morning.

It didn't seem to fit. Jack Parsons and Ed Forman had been two uncommonly bright kids experimenting with rockets, and corresponding with the early rocket pioneers. They had showed up at Cal Tech and formed an alliance with some of von Karman's graduate students. Unlike the latter, Parsons and Forman already had hands-on experience with mixing solid rocket fuels and constructing rocket bodies.

Cal Tech thought the idea of space rockets was silly, except for von Karman, perhaps the nation's leading expert in jet propulsion. Von Karman gave the group the use of facilities. After some explosions, they ended up in Pasadena's Arroyo Seco--a small canyon that passes near South Orange Grove Blvd.--at a spot near Devil's Gate Dam, and near where von Karman, Parsons, and others founded the Jet Propulsion Laboratory a few years later.

The project had soon attracted the attention of the U.S. military, which was looking for some form of jet-assisted takeoff for planes using the short air strips in Southeast Asia. The group obtained a number of JATO patents, most under Parsons' name, and formed a company named Aerojet Engineering Corporation to sell JATO units to the military. The early stockholders had had financing problems, and their intellectual

property had essentially been expropriated by General Tire and Rubber.

But JPL's WAC Corporal had become the first rocket to enter extra-terrestrial space. And another member of the original rocket group had gone on to found China's missile program.

Sex rituals? Was there some sort of contradiction here? On the other hand, this was an important lead. Sex itself is a powerful explosive. Perhaps Parsons' death had something to do with his unusual personal life.

The new lead was waiting for me at the office. Sheri had started the laborious process of sifting through our own research collection. She had marked a reference to Parsons in *The Great Beast*, the biography of Crowley mentioned by von Karman.

One of the participants in those sex rituals was L. Ron Hubbard, the future founder of Scientology.

A group of Crowley followers had established a church in Pasadena in the 1930s. It was called the Agape Lodge, and was started by Wilfred T. Smith, whom Crowley had met in Vancouver in 1915. According to John Symonds, Crowley's biographer, Wilfred Smith subsequently aroused Crowley's ire by seducing Helen Parsons, the wife of John Whiteside Parsons. Parsons was then one of the Agape Lodge flock. Symonds referred to Parsons as "Dr." Parsons, apparently thinking his Cal Tech association implied a doctorate.

Crowley wrote Smith that his seductions were giving the Agape Lodge the reputation of being "that slimy abomination, a `love cult'." (I found it difficult to see how something named *agape* could have avoided that stigma.) Crowley apparently expected little reform from Smith, pointing out that when he had met Smith in 1915, Smith was sleeping with both a woman and her daughter. So Smith was disfellowshipped, and Parsons took over the church. Parsons, meanwhile, had

transferred his affections to Helen's younger sister "Betty" (Sarah Elisabeth Northrup).

In the summer of 1945, some time after Parsons had sold his shares in Aerojet, a young L. Ron Hubbard appeared at the Agape Lodge. Parsons thought Hubbard had great magic potential. Betty did too, and started sleeping with Hubbard. Parsons wrote Crowley of Ron Hubbard: "He is the most Thelemic person I have ever met and is in complete accord with our own principles. He is also interested in establishing the New Aeon. Thy son, John."

With the loss of Betty, Parsons set about magically attracting another principal partner. He had succeeded by February 1946 when he wrote Crowley about a girl named Marjorie Cameron. "I have my elemental! She turned up one night after the conclusion of the Operation, and has been with me ever since, although she goes back to New York next week. She has red hair and slant green eyes as specified."

In the newspaper clippings Homer Nilmot had given me, Robert Cameron was cited as Parsons' brother-in-law. Apparently Parsons was married to Marjorie Cameron when he died in 1952.

Parsons continued his magical operations with the sexual participation of Marjorie Cameron. By some unclear mechanism, these resulted in revelations delivered through the mouth of L. Ron Hubbard. Parsons gave them special significance, writing Crowley: "I have been in direct touch with One who is most Holy and Beautiful as mentioned in *The Book of the Law*. I cannot write the name at present. First instructions were received direct through Ron, the seer. I have followed them to the letter."

This was pretty rich. "Ron the seer." If Ron was God's (any god's) mouthpiece, he was in an ideal position to manipulate Parsons. Hubbard had started by taking Parsons' girl. You could already guess that Parsons'

money would be next.

Crowley wrote to his head man in America, referred to as Frater Saturnus: "Apparently Parsons or Hubbard or somebody is producing a Moonchild. I get fairly frantic when I contemplate the idiocy of these louts."

Moonchild? What was a Moonchild? I made a note to look it up.

In the meantime, Hubbard ran off with Betty in Parsons' yacht. Parsons wrote Crowley that he had magically evoked a storm which drove the two back to shore. "I have them tied up; they cannot move without going to jail," he wrote.

Symonds' account of Hubbard abruptly ends there. Clearly, however, there was more to the story. Was there a continued relationship between Hubbard and Parsons?

Later in 1949, Symonds relates, Parsons took the Oath of the Abyss, which was said to be an attempt to unite his consciousness with the Universal Consciousness. Parsons gave himself the magical name of "Belarion Arniluss Al Dajjal AntiChrist." Symonds thought Parsons was going crazy at this point.

"Dajjal," Sheri explained, "is Arabic for 'deceiver,' which was the name given the Antichrist in Islamic legend. Ad-Dajjal was supposed to have a red face, one eye in the middle of his forehead, and to rule all the world, except Mecca and Medina, for forty years before being destroyed by the Mahdi."

Weird stuff. Why would Parsons chose that name?

"So now we know the real identity of the Antichrist," I told Sheri. "Parsons was trying to start a New Aeon or New Age, and Hubbard (Ron the Seer) was trying to cash-in on it. There are God-hucksters on the radio who have suspected all along that New Age movements are

the work of the Antichrist. I think they're right. When you hear someone declaring a `New Age,' or a `New Order' run for your life."

"What's wrong with a New Age?" Sheri wanted to know.

"I suppose it's mainly a question of who's in charge. When a group proclaims a New Age, you can bet they themselves expect to end up running the show. Those in power now typically wouldn't need, and wouldn't want, a new order for themselves. They're doing well enough under the old order, thank you. So it's either another elite group making a power-grab, or else it's disgruntled trouble-makers, angrily enduring the `present distress,' perhaps envious of the rest of the world or suffering from an illusion of insignificance. These types might well vote for radical political and social reforms. The little guys in the present age, naturally, are going to be well-rewarded big honchos in the next world. But today's little guys are a large, heterogeneous group, and they disagree on the nature of the changes needed."

We catalogued a few questions: What had lead Parsons to become a closet magician? Why was he so naive where L. Ron Hubbard was concerned? What were Parsons' occult activities immediately prior to his death?

Where was L. Ron Hubbard in June 1952?

Then there was Homer Nilmot. He undoubtedly already knew what we had thus far discovered about John Whiteside Parsons. Probably a good deal more. What hadn't he simply told me at the outset? What was he trying to accomplish?

I had met Homer a few weeks previously at a party given by Trisha, Sheri's roommate. Homer introduced himself and asked what I did. I told him I was an "ontological detective". The description had just slipped out, and it occurred to me it would look good on a

business card. Homer chose to focus on the detective part and asked for a meeting. At lunch at Downey's he seemed to know a lot about me--enough to make me wonder who was playing detective. He had given me a cash retainer, and had discouraged any questions about himself or his organization.

The strange phone call I had received indicated someone else was also interested in Jack Parsons.

"Why don't we focus on the following," I said to Sheri. "First, how did L. Ron Hubbard come to meet Jack Parsons? The biography of Crowley doesn't explain that. Was it through the O.T.O.? And what happened after the incident with Ron running off with Betty in the yacht? We need more details."

Sheri had arranged a meeting with David Wilson, the Penn academic who was supposed to be the Crowley expert. Like many academics, I assumed he had fallen in love with his subject. If so, this would be helpful. In order to understand Parsons, I had to see the world through his eyes, and Parsons obviously admired Crowley.

How would an expert on rocket propulsion reconcile his professional life with the other one involving the Agape Lodge? Maybe Parsons just liked sex. Or maybe there was more to it than that.

There was a small line of students waiting outside David Wilson's office. I had never understood why a professor would voluntarily choose to teach a summer session. I knocked on the door and they looked somewhat resentful when Wilson came out with a departing student and told those waiting office hours were over for the day. He gave me a good-humored grin and we went inside.

The room was sparsely furnished, but exuded more the atmosphere of a private den than an academic office. Missing were the stacks of papers and research reports

piled high on desk, filing cabinets, and spare chairs. There was an oriental rug spread out in front of the desk, with two padded armchairs angled on either side. Nested among the books on the wall shelves was a CD player, softly pumping out "Bass Strings" by Country Joe and the Fish. A framed print on the wall showed a dancer sensuously arching backward, her left hand resting on the floor behind her.

Wilson himself was in his mid-fifties, with layered medium-length white hair combed forward. His face showed the intense enthusiasm of an undergraduate.

"So you're interested in that old rascal guru Aleister Crowley," he said, waving me to an armchair. "What can I tell you about him?"

Homer Nilmot's questions to me had indicated a political motivation for his interest in Jack Parsons. I decided to start with that angle.

"Can you tell me something about the political attitudes of Crowley and his followers?"

The answer came almost immediately, without reflection, like a well-rehearsed lecture for Psychology 101.

"You have to distinguish between Crowley-the-Herald-of-the-New-Age, and Crowley-the-Man. Crowley-the-Cambridge-Don had the turn-of-the-century British upper class attitude that viewed much of the outer world as peopled with inferior wogs, geeks, and niggers, who for their own good needed to be ruled with a firm British hand. By contrast, the *Book of the Law* (his revelation) was democratic, anarchistic, hacking apart the group mythologies of society and nation with their self-perpetuating codes of personal and economic bondage.

"Crowley-the-Man sometimes said that women were creatures of inferior minds. The Book of the Law said

every man and every woman was a star, which Crowley-the-Herald-of-the-New-Age interpreted to mean full equality between the sexes. Most of Crowley's followers were in fact women of an independent spirit.

"Occult organizations are by their nature hierarchical. There are masters and disciples, inner and outer orders. Everyone gets spiritually ranked according to his or her initiatory stage. This aspect of things undoubtedly appealed to Crowley-the-Man, who wanted to possess the occult knowledge and spiritual stature denied ordinary people. Nevertheless, Crowley-the-New-Ager set out to democratize magic by publishing the secret traditions.

"Crowley's political program was essentially set out in *Liber Oz*."

Wilson got up to pull out a typed sheet from a drawer in his desk. It was a plain sheet of white paper with no heading. An address in California was listed at the bottom of the page. I read:

Every man and every woman is a star.

There is no god but man.

Man has the right to live by his own law,

**to live in the way that he
wills to do,
to work as he will,
to play as he will,
to rest as he will,
to die when and how he
will.**

Man has the right to eat what he will,

**to drink what he will,
to dwell where he will,**

**to move as he will on the
face of the earth.**

**Man has the right to think what he
will,**

**to speak what he will,
to write what he will,
to draw, paint, carve,
etch, mould, build as he
will,
to dress as he will.**

Man has the right to love as he will,

**take your fill and will of
love as ye will,
when, where, and with
whom ye will.**

**Man has the right to kill those who
would thwart these rights.**

The slaves shall serve.

Love is the law, love under will.

I thought about it for a bit. Then: "This is powerful political stuff," I offered.

"It would upset a few people," Wilson said. "The right to die when and how you will? The military and the medical profession would prefer to keep that prerogative to themselves.

"The right to dwell and move around where you will? That's anathema to the modern conception of the nation-state. How would we dispense with immigration authorities, border patrols, the passport mafia, and the coast guard? How would the tax collector keep track of anyone in such a world?

"To love as you will? Free love provoked violent reaction in the Sixties. And who believes in it anymore in the Live AIDS era?"

"To eat as you will? That implies sovereignty over one's own body. Are you kidding? Look at the governmental and media hysteria over substances with psychopharmacological properties. As for less controversial chemicals, it still takes an average of 8-10 years and \$100,000,000 to get a new drug approved by the FDA and out on the market. Thousands can die while the FDA decides whether a new treatment is 'safe'."

"Free speech? Destroyed by the libel laws. A few years ago the Trilateral Commission published a book by Harvard political scientist Samuel Huntington which said that the problem with modern democracies was there was too much democracy and too much free speech. That democracies could only survive as long as most people left the problems of running a country in the hands of an educated elite, like (and this was Huntington's example) in the good old days when Harry Truman was able to make do with a handful of Wall Street lawyers and bankers. Huntington proposed going after the press with a liberal dose of the libel laws."

"No God but man? What would the religious establishment say to that? How are you going to terrify people into submission without an external supernatural power to back up arbitrary codes of largely monetary conduct?"

Okay, I thought. This still doesn't tell me much about Homer Nilmot's interest. Or not that I could see, right off hand.

"Do you know anything about a Crowley follower named Jack Parsons?" I asked.

"Just what I've read here and there. The Symonds biography of Crowley has some material. Then there are

some books by the current head of an O.T.O. lodge in London, Kenneth Grant. One is called *The Magical Revival* and another *Aleister Crowley & The Hidden God*. They discuss Parsons' experiences with a 'Frater X.' If you compare the events with Symonds' biography, Frater X is obviously L. Ron Hubbard, the Scientology founder. Grant chose not to use Hubbard's name, perhaps fearing a dirty tricks or character assassination campaign conducted by some of Hubbard's fanatical followers."

I took note of the two books.

"Does it make sense for a scientist like Parsons to be a magician?" I asked.

Wilson just grinned at me.

"Does it make sense for a scientist to be a Protestant?" he finally responded. "Did it make sense for Isaac Newton, the inventor of the calculus and expositor of the law of universal gravitation, to write commentaries on the biblical books of Daniel and Revelation, and to devote his time delving into alchemical treatises?"

"Okay. Let me alter the question. What is the relation of magic to science and religion?"

I asked that question because I was annoyed at his superior attitude, but he didn't seem to notice.

"Sir James Frazier, the anthropologist, characterized science, magic, and religion as three approaches to reality, and I would agree. The scientific approach can be summarized in the phrase 'seeing is believing'. Scientists are from Missouri--you've got to show them. Physical science deals with the basic forces of material reality--gravity, electromagnetism, and the weak and strong nuclear forces--as elucidated by experiment.

"The key psychological characteristic of the domain of physical science is that it purports to study behavior that

manifests itself independently of human cognition or belief. You don't have to understand gravity in order to fall off a building and die from the impact. It doesn't matter if you've ever heard of gravity or even if you vehemently deny its existence. Stick your finger in an electrical socket and you get a shock, whether saint or sinner, Methodist or Moonie.

"Ideally, scientists are supposed to be neutral skeptics.

"For example, Einstein said that large gravitational bodies such as stars would warp space-time around themselves. So that even a light ray passing by would apparently change directions-- just as though it had been 'pulled' off course by gravity--and continue at an angle to its original path. This was an interesting theory by a leading scientist. But the theory was only believed when the phenomena was actually observed in the solar eclipse of May 29, 1919. When announced later, the confirmation made headlines around the world. Even then Einstein himself wasn't convinced his own theory was correct, because he had made other predictions that hadn't yet been confirmed."

The phone began to ring.

"Anyway, that's the way the scientific approach is supposed to work. But doesn't really," he added, picking up the phone.

When he finished I asked him what he meant.

"Well, scientists don't work in a vacuum. You go to college to learn the current body of accepted, and acceptable, beliefs. What questions you ask depends on what questions you feel comfortable raising in a seminar comprised of educated colleagues. The university doctoral program indifferently screens out the incompetent and the competently heretical. What experiments you perform depends on what experiments are 'worthwhile'. What is 'worthwhile,' of course, depends on what you can get grant money for, and what

you can publish. Both of these require referees who are already grounded in the body of current beliefs.

"Here is one example. French peasants in the Seventeenth Century kept reporting meteorites. The scientific community laughed at the superstitious reports from gullible bumpkins. Any educated person `knew' that stones don't fall from the skies.

"If you really believed in observation and experiment, of course, you would have gone out and seen the meteorites for yourself. This just shows that how scientists actually operate differs from the Pollyanna descriptions of the scientific method you find in high school textbooks."

"The Seventeenth Century occurred some time ago," I astutely observed.

"It's not any different today," he replied. "In 1962 a French astrophysicist named Jacque Vallee watched his colleagues erase a magnetic tape on which his satellite-tracking team had recorded data on an unknown flying object. The data had a suspicious resemblance to classical ufo sightings, and he was given the explanation that `people would laugh at us.' What is interesting to a psychologist is the fact astronomers were willing to destroy scientific data rather than run the risk someone might associate them with cultists and cranks.

"You even have witch-hunting organizations like CSICOP--the Committee for Snotty Interpretations of Claims of the Paranormal--which engages in character assassination of scientists involved in parapsychological research. CSICOP members claim their goal is rooting out fraud. But it isn't fraud that really upsets them. It's heresy. CSICOP once ran a study refuting a particular astrological correlation. When one of the editors of their magazine realized that a statistical error had been made, and that the study actually supported the astrological assertion, the magazine refused to print a retraction. He

wrote a letter to the editor, but they wouldn't print that. He himself then did a further study, which this time came to the `right' conclusion, and CSICOP published it, but refused to publish the reference to the error in the previous study. They then agreed to publish a statement that his second report had been `censored.' Then, without his knowledge, they censored the reference that the report had been censored. It shows their real function is propaganda.

"They have a court jester, an erstwhile stage magician and a paid disinformation agent for the U.S. Department of Defense, who goes around claiming parapsychological research results are obtained by trickery. Imagine CSICOP scientists being led around by the nose by a stage performer! CSICOP even got Nobel-prize winners to sign a statement that astrology was superstition. It was absurd. Most of the people who signed that statement wouldn't know a Gemini from a Taurus. Yet they were perfectly willing to declare there was no scientific evidence for astrology."

David Wilson was clearly on his soap box. I just listened.

"It's the basic appeal to authority rather than evidence. The Pope says you shouldn't wear prophylactics--he's the Pope, after all. And a CSICOP T.V. scientist says there's no evidence for psychokinesis--well, he's on T. V. after all. He must know what he's talking about."

He paused, so I interjected: "How would you characterize the religious and magical approaches?" I was still listening between the lines, trying to get a sense of where Jack Parsons may have been coming from--living simultaneous lives as a rocket genius and a Crowley disciple.

"The religious and magical approaches are quite distinct. Both believe in an unseen order, a sacred realm. Both are concerned with laws that operate according to one's psychological state. It's difficult to

generalize, but the religious approach is basically concerned with worship and reward and punishment. You worship a God by emulating his characteristics. The devotees of Dionysus were infused with his spirit. Followers of Jesus receive and express his love.

"The magician is more pragmatic. Crowley defined magic as the 'art and science of causing changes in conformity with will.' That is, magic integrates psychology and physics. Magicians believe in the Hermetic principal 'as above, so below.' There is a complete correspondence between the inner and outer world, between the microcosm and macrocosm, between your state of mind and your outer world experience.

"The magical approach is technological in that you want to bring about changes in your own or others behavior, in the state of society, or in physical matter. But the starting point for effecting change is the consciousness of the magician himself. Or herself.

"A magician would not hesitate to use a religious approach. For example, a magician might meditate on the God Dionysus, or perform a prayer or ritual dedicated to Dionysus, in order to infuse his own consciousness with the Dionysian spirit, if this were important for the accomplishment of a particular goal.

"Neither would a magician hesitate to study science. Science is, after all, a very powerful method for getting at certain aspects of physical reality. In fact, one standard type of magical exercise involves immersing yourself in a point of view alternative to what you are normally accustomed.

"Around here," he waved his hand vaguely at the surrounding walls--I assumed he meant the university--"we talk about putting on our psychologist's hat, or economist's hat, or physicist's hat--meaning you interpret something in terms of the conventional wisdom of that profession. A good magician believes in

the multi-model approach. For the moment he may become a psychologist, or economist, or physicist, or he may take the cosmic viewpoint of a priest in the ancient Egyptian city of On, or adopt the paranoia of a life-long member of the John Birch society. The manipulation of reality requires a plasticity of consciousness."

"Aren't there different types of magic?" I asked. "How does, say, black magic differ from white magic?"

Wilson laughed. "How does the gas mileage of white cars compare to that of black cars?"

"You're saying there's no difference."

"Not at all. People who buy black cars may be, in general, different drivers from people who buy white cars, so white cars may get different mileage." He paused. "I suppose there are different ways to answer your question. On the one hand there's the good-guys-wear-white-hats approach. White magic is what we do. Black magic is what anyone I don't like does. In this sense, `white' magic is magic used for a purpose you approve of.

"But magic is really a neutral technology, somewhat independent of the goals of the magician."

Wilson paused, thought for a moment, then decided to stop there.

"Nothing you have said so far makes Crowley or magic seem all that awful, aside from whether you think it makes any sense." I said. "So why does the mention of Crowley's name arouse so much hostility?"

"Oh. For a number of reasons. Crowley wasn't all that nice of a guy. He was a notorious practical joker and show-off. If anyone conceived a disagreeable opinion of Crowley, he went out of his way to confirm their worst impressions, often acting like a dirty-minded little kid. It was perhaps the inevitable consequence of growing

up in a family who believed in the literal truth of the Bible, thought they were the only true Christians, and looked forward to the imminent return of Christ.

Besides the fact that he enjoyed manipulating others' perceptions of reality, Crowley was, I think, practicing the magical principle that relates the degree of power you have over someone to your capacity to generate intense emotion in that person. That is, it was better they spoke badly of him, than they not speak of him at all.

"He was a show-off alright. When he first left Cambridge, he went around as a Count Vladimir Savareff. Another time, when the Paris authorities had commissioned a bronze butterfly to cover the private parts of the monument which Jacob Epstein had made for the tomb of Oscar Wilde in Pere-Lachaise, Crowley stole the butterfly and showed up at the Cafe Royal with the butterfly affixed as a cod-piece over his evening dress.

"Then there was sex. Remember, we are talking about the early part of the twentieth century. This was a time when parents still read John Harvey Kellogg's *Plain Facts for Old and Young* to learn the thirty-nine signs of the secret vice of self-abuse in their children. Kellogg exemplified the spirit of the age when he recommended having the skin covering the end of the penis sewn up to prevent erection, and the application of carbolic acid to the clitoris to prevent abnormal excitement in females.

"Well, Crowley's magic, especially later on, was tantric. It involved sex. To the public at large that made it black magic by definition. The public essentially first heard about Crowley when he opened his Abbey of Thelema at Cefalu in Sicily. The British papers began a campaign of vilification claiming that the Abbey was inhabited by drug addicts who spent their days indulging in sexual abominations. As a result, Crowley was banished from the country by Mussolini in 1923."

Banishment by Mussolini? Was that serious condemnation or not? But I dropped that line of thought

because here was opportunity to ask a basic question about those sex rituals.

"What's sex magic?"

Wilson turned for a moment and looked out the window across his desk.

"Like most other types of magic ritual, it's a way of reprogramming the human mind," he said finally. He got up and moved to one of the bookshelves. "I usually refer people to this book for the basic mechanism involved."

The book was entitled *The Mind Possessed: A Physiology of Possession, Mysticism, and Faith Healing*. It was written by a British psychiatrist named William Sargant.

"Sexual magic was practiced by the Ordo Templi Orientis long before Crowley became a member. Crowley, incidentally, always wrote OTO in a manner that made the phallic symbolism of the letters obvious--the O's representing the testicles. He also formed the A in Aleister with curls at the bottoms of the verticle strokes and the cross-bar positioned at the top of the letter, so that the total effect was an ithyphallic version of OTO."

The phone rang again. While Wilson talked to a student about an exam, I looked once more at the sheet of paper Wilson had given me when I had first come in the office. A group entitled JPMS had sponsored the flier. The address was in Glendale, California.

When Wilson got off the phone, he looked at me as though it were time for me to leave.

"Just a couple more quick questions," I said. "There are groups of Crowley followers around today. What are they like?"

"It all depends. Many intellectuals read Crowley for the clarity of his thought, which contrasts with a lot of the New Age bilge floating around today-- channelled revelations from 35,000-year-old Lemurians and moralistic dolphins and whatnot. But keep in mind the Media-Crowley. The Media-Crowley was the wickedest man alive. Look at the Bantam edition of Crowley's autobiography. Notice the advertising blurb at the top."

He showed me a paperback *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley*. The blurb said these were "the profane and uninhibited memoirs of the most notorious magician, satanist and drug cultist of the 20th century."

"Anyone who actually read the book will come away with a much different impression that they get from the cover. But think about it. There are all sorts of kooks and crazies who want to be associated with Crowley because they take this hype seriously. They're looking for a piece of the action of drugs, black masses, satanism, sex, bloody rituals, and whatever else the media have lead them to expect. It's not likely to be a nice crowd. And some of those weirdos can be downright dangerous."

Wilson looked at me carefully. "Downright dangerous," he repeated.

"What about this group?" I held up the sheet of paper with the quotations from *Liber Oz*, and tapped the name at the bottom.

Wilson shrugged ignorance.

"What does JPMS stand for?"

"Oh that." Wilson didn't bat an eye. "That's the Jack Parsons Memorial Society."

(to be continued)

The Magician is the author of other episodes of the Jack Parsons story (<http://zolatimes.com/jparart/Aparmenu.html>).

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Jack Parsons &

The Curious Origins of the American Space Program

by The Magician

Part 4: Abreaction Therapy

There was no pay phone at the Palladium, a restaurant on the U. of Penn campus, but they let me use the house phone at the end of the bar. I told Sheri about the books Wilson had mentioned and asked her to get me a direct flight to Los Angeles.

I felt the stare as I turned. The man was wearing a black suit and sitting on one of the high wooden barstools. Someone had apparently replaced his blood with embalming fluid and it still annoyed him. The deep-set eyes in the greenish gray flesh stared without blinking. He stood up and moved toward me.

"Have the time?" the mouth asked.

"It's two-thirty," I guessed.

"You lie!" he affirmed with some belligerence. "It's a quarter past four." He glared at me before turning and shuffling out the door to Locust Walk.

When I followed a few moments later, he had disappeared.

I went back into the Palladium and dialed the time. It was 2:33. Then I tried the number Homer Nilmot had given me.

"Trans-Global Consultants," the woman answered. She

said Mr. Nilmot was out but she would relay my message.

When I got back to the office, Sheri told me she had gotten a flight reservation for the day after tomorrow.

"Just enough time to tie up some loose ends," I said. I told her about the walking stiff I had met at the Palladium.

"Sounds like one of my two Men in Black," Sheri responded. "The one from the cemetery, she said gravely."

"Well, this was definitely an actor from Rent-A-Ghoul. Who are these Men in Black supposed to be, again? Maybe that's the point of this little charade. To create distraction."

"The classic Men-In-Black are the bad guys of the space brother world," Sheri said. "Traditionally, they are tanned or olive-skinned individuals with high cheek bones, faintly Oriental in appearance, often driving black Cadillacs or Buicks or something, and who appear to people who have had ufo experiences and threaten them to keep quiet about whatever has happened. Or sometimes they show up in the guise of Xist or Air Force agents, take down full reports of the victim's experiences, and tell him the military is conducting an investigation. Except if the `investigators' are investigated, their credentials often turn out to be bogus. Experiences with MIBs may be, incidentally, the reason General Carl Spaatz, our first Air Force Chief of Staff, announced at a press conference in 1948, `There is no truth to the rumors that the flying saucers are from Spain, or that they are piloted by Spaniards.' "

I thought about that. "Well, that doesn't fit this fellow," I said. "He didn't have the slightest hint of a suntan, and I haven't seen any ufos lately."

"Me neither," said Sheri. "I guess we don't qualify to be

among the chosen few." She curled out her lower lip in a pout.

There was something bothering me about what happened at the Palladium. It seemed, well, *familiar*. "Give me a Men-in-Black example," I asked Sheri. "Something early, maybe. Something classic. You know, before the media and the hype took over."

"Easy," she said. "There was Albert Bender. He closed down his International Flying Saucer Bureau in 1953. He said three men wearing black suits were responsible. Most amateur ufologists concluded it was government agents who had put pressure on him. It was another ten years before Bender told the full account in his book *Flying Saucers and the Three Men*. Bender's three men weren't your average government bureaucrats. No, sir. They had glowing eyes. They materialized and dematerialized in his apartment. They took him to a secret ufo base in Antarctica. And so on."

"So it was likely a hypnotic experience," I said. "An extended mind fuck."

"Or whatever," Sheri said. "He exhibited the usual symptoms from contact--upset stomach, loss of appetite, headaches, lacunar amnesia."

It came to me, then, what had been bothering me about the Palladium ghoul. It took a little digging through the files, but we found it soon enough.

It was a paper entitled "The Confusion Technique in Hypnosis," by the hypnotherapist Milton H. Erickson. It was published in the *American Journal of Clinical Hypnosis* in 1964. Erickson gives an example of the technique in action:

"[A] man came rushing around the corner of a building and bumped hard against me as I stood bracing myself against the wind. Before he could recover his poise

to speak to me, I glanced elaborately at my watch and courteously, as if he had inquired the time of day, I stated, 'It's exactly ten minutes of two,' though it was actually closer to 4:00 P.M., and walked on. About half a block away, I turned and saw him still looking at me, undoubtedly still puzzled and bewildered by my remark."

Erickson goes on to explain that the technique works through the use of vague and puzzling statements. Because of the initial confusion, the hypnotic subject will then treat the first clearly understandable piece of information as unusually important.

"Maybe they're softening up our minds now," I said to Sheri. "They're getting ready to stick it to us."

"Whoever *they* are," Sheri said.

I asked Sheri to keep trying Homer Nilmot's number. Meanwhile I made myself a cup of coffee, and sat down to study the theory of sex magic in William Sargant's *The Mind Possessed*. David Wilson had let me borrow his copy, which I gladly accepted. Returning it would give me an excuse to talk to him again.

According to Sargant, there is a general physiological mechanism for reprogramming behavior. It involves the creation of intense emotion, such as fear or anger, leading up to a collapse from emotional exhaustion. Sargant originally studied soldiers who were having mental difficulties stemming from traumatic war experiences. It turned out such problems could generally be alleviated through a drug-induced emotional experience of sufficient intensity to lead to a general physical collapse. Sargant called it an "abreactive experience".

"After the patient had come round," Sargant wrote, "he might burst into tears or shake his head and smile, and

then report that all his previous fears and abnormal preoccupations had suddenly left him, that his mind was functioning more normally again, that he felt more like his old self, that memories which had obsessed and terrified him could now be thought of without fear or anxiety."

It was not necessary to "re-live" the original experience. Just to generate the emotional collapse. The mind, according to Sargant, subsequently became pliable to new programming--new behavior and attitudes, just as it apparently had been when the original problems were implanted.

Drugs were only one method for inducing the collapse. Music and dancing was another. So was terror induced by hell-fire preaching. Or a holy-roller atmosphere of music and confession and induction of the Holy Ghost. Or electro-convulsive therapy. Or exhaustion through repeated sexual orgasm.

The collapse could serve the purpose of a general release from worries, guilts, obsessions, and sins. But one also became open to new ideas, Sargant claimed. One could become a new man or woman, for good or evil, in the service of the Gods, the flag, or the self.

In sexual magic, the trance is induced through sexual exhaustion. Sargant quotes Aleister Crowley, the magician himself, on the details:

"The candidate is made ready for the ordeal by general athletic training and by fasting. On the appointed day he is attended by one or more experienced attendants whose duty it is to exhaust him sexually by every known means. The candidate will sink into a sleep of utter exhaustion but he must be again sexually stimulated and then again allowed to fall asleep. This alternation is to continue indefinitely until the candidate is in a

state which is neither sleep nor waking,
and in which his spirit is set free by
perfect exhaustion of the body . . . [and]
communes with the Most Highest and the
Most Holy Lord God of its Being, Maker
of Heaven and Earth."

I called Sheri back in and read the passage to her.

"So basically you fuck your brains out until you see
visions and talk to God and the angels," she
summarized.

That seemed to be pretty much it.

"With the help of experienced attendants," I noted. "It
probably induces a change in the brain's hormonal
balance. But obviously there are more techniques than
just the one Sargant mentions here. For example, when
Jack Parsons and Marjorie Cameron were engaged in
ritual intercourse, it was L. Ron Hubbard who was
communing with the Most High. Ron the Seer, right?"

"Sounds like a complex subject. If you want the whole
technology, perhaps you should go the source." She laid
a book on my desk. It was Crowley's *Magic in Theory
and Practice*.

I groaned inwardly. This wasn't what I wanted to spend
my time on. I just had the vague hope that if I could get
into Parsons' mind-set, it might help me find out who
killed him. It was a comforting belief since it was all I
had to go on at the moment. But getting into Parsons'
mind- set was turning out to be a complex process.

I studied Sheri's posture. She was sitting with her feet
propped up, the hem of her skirt slipping well above her
knees. She was wearing a silk blouse that clung
seductively to her breasts.

"You want to get something to eat after work?" she
asked. "I'll buy you a burger and a margarita at the

Copacabana."

I considered it. The offer was tempting. I was a sucker for fresh lime juice and tequila. I hesitated, though. All my instincts told me not to get too chummy with the help. The phone wouldn't get answered, the research wouldn't get done, the office would fall apart.

On the other hand, we were only going to get a hamburger. Why not. Just because she wanted to buy me dinner didn't mean she expected to sit on my face for dessert.

"Sure," I said. "Why don't we go have a margarita?"

At Copa we got a table on the 4th Street side where we could watch the foot traffic at the corner with South. Jimmy Cliff's "The Harder They Come" was booming out over the sound system. As we sipped our drinks, Sheri told me that Albert Bender was also a student of magic.

"This was going on while Bender was studying ufos. What happened with respect to the Men-in-Black may have been only obliquely related to 'flying saucers.' Magic is a traditional method of conjuring up elementals. And Bender suffered from a lot of poltergeist manifestations."

"In that case, maybe Jack Parsons was also visited by Men-in-Black," I said.

"Maybe it's all magic," Sheri said. "The saucers are just techno-vener. Most of the interesting stuff seems to take place in someone's mind, with no witnesses."

I watched her tongue lightly lick salt from the rim of the glass before she took a sip of margarita. When I had interviewed Sheri only a couple of months previously, she had claimed she was a Hindu vegetarian who didn't drink but got stoned frequently. Now here she sat with a drink in her hand, and she had just ordered a

hamburger.

"No salad tonight?" I asked.

She shrugged. "Sometimes like Fritz Mondale I ask myself, 'Where's the beef?' I get this intense craving for bloody bovine carcass."

"As long as you don't knock over little old cows in the street to support your habit. Or stand on a soapbox preaching the occult virtues of meat-eating."

"No possibility of that, not since I found Bob. Bob says death to all fanatics."

She had been a rock groupie, once getting arrested in Miami. She had played guitar for several years, then had switched to electric blues harp and had performed with Muddy Waters.

"Bob drinks, you know," she said, her tongue at work on the rim of the glass. "He's drinking buddies with the Fightin' Jesus. That's the one who comes bringing not peace, but a sword. The Macho Jesus, not the wimp who turns the other check."

"So that's why you were reading Wigglesworth--to study up on the Fightin' Jesus."

Once she had rehearsed for the part of Mary Magdalene in Jesus Christ Superstar. Although all in all she preferred Krishna, she said, as Krishna could be seen in anyone, including a lover, she had claimed. But that was the last I had ever heard of Krishna. Maybe it's just something you say in a job interview, when you don't want to sound like a Jesus fanatic.

"Nah. American history is cultural edification. Roots, you know? Which reminds me. You want to go to a party tonight? It's called the Mauvaises Arts Ball, and gets started around eleven o'clock. It's a parody of the Beaux Arts Ball, the one for Arts and Architecture held

later in October."

"Mauvaises Arts?"

"If the Beaux Arts Ball were the semi-orderly formality of a ceremonial dinner dance, then the Mauvaises Arts Ball would be the orgy in the back room. It was inspired, I think, by the reviews of Bad Cinema that Dan Akyroyd used to do on Saturday Night Live. Anyway this year's theme is Apocalypse Culture."

"As in the Four Horsemen?"

"As in the Kali Yuga, Friday the Thirteenth, nuclear winter, the mark of the beast, marrying and giving in marriage, chaos theory, the Society Hill Dungeon, rumors of war, the return of Quetzalcoatl, 2001, lycanthropy, famine, the invasion of the body builders, automobile air bags, Presidential astrology, AIDS needles washing up on the beach, earthquakes, sex with robots, psychic warfare, cable TV--all those things."

"I take it I don't need to wear a Tuxedo then."

"You can wear pretty much anything you want. There will be the usual artsy crowd there, and a lot of pinks and assorted politicians. A couple of fellow Sub-Genii are scheduled to speak, or rather to rant and rave. It's all part of the atmosphere. Later in the evening there will be a channeling session delivered by Helen Morley, the Avatar of Amargi."

"Where's Amargi?"

"Amargi is a Sumerian word meaning freedom."

That appeared auspicious. It sounded like fun, and I said I would go. I worked my way around the bar to the phone, called Trans-Global Consultants, and left a message telling Homer Nilmot where I would be.

When I returned to the table, I saw a mounted

Philadelphia patrolman had stopped just outside the window. From time to time passersby would pause to pet the horse. All but the better-looking women were told to keep their hands to themselves. I guess the horse was picky.

"So what did David Wilson at Penn have to say?"

I told her about *Liber Oz*.

"It sounds to me pretty much a strong statement about individual rights," Sheri opined. "I think the Founding Fathers would have approved. Leave out the love part, maybe."

"Yeah. Whatever happened to politics, anyway. Now every political campaign is run as a crusade to solve the world's problems."

"So. You don't believe in crusades against evil, taking out the bad guys, all that." Sheri's tone was mocking.

"No. The way I look at it, organized sin and organized sin-fighting are two sides of the same corporate coin. It's like the Society Hill Towers' resident priest who has a number of women confess that the grocer's new delivery boy has seduced them. He makes them each put a hundred dollars in the poor box. Then the delivery boy appears, and the priest asks angrily, 'What have you got to say for yourself?' 'Just this,' the delivery boy replies. 'Either you cut me in on those hundred-dollar fees, or I take my business to some other parish.' "

"Yeah," Sheri agreed. "You can't get rich saving souls if everyone's converted."

"Crisis managers couldn't cope without calamity. You can't get elected President without a social problem to fight, or a menace to protect people from. Of course the 'problems' never disappear. The Cossacks are always coming to rape our women and destroy Our Way of Life. And by definition there'll always be people with

below average income or whatever. The chief function of government is to find problems that can be profitably managed. Everyone wants to save the world, as long as doing so gives them power, and as long as someone else pays for it."

"Why do you think people go into politics, anyway?"

This was getting too serious for discussion over margaritas, I thought.

"A lot of men go into politics because of the women. Ever been to a major political convention or an election night party? Sexy women everywhere. And there's nothing like working for a noble cause to get them hot and willing."

Sheri blushed. I was surprised.

"It's niacin," Sheri explained. "I took a 500 milligram capsule a few minutes ago. It creates a skin flush similar to the Masters and Johnson sexual flush. Trisha's recommendation. Niacin reduces serum cholesterol--the fat in your bloodstream. She was a biochemistry major."

Sheri decided to change the subject.

"The other day I was in Garland of Letters--the New Age bookstore down the street, and these two women were looking at books, and this other woman comes by and says, 'You ladies don't look at that witchcraft. Read your Bible.' "

"I read the Bible one time myself," I said. "Not Bob's, the other one."

Sheri looked skeptical.

"Really. The begets and all. One thing I remember it says is that Satan appears as an angel of light. You don't hear much about that, these days. To hear some

Christians tell it, Satan has pointed ears, 666 tattooed on his forehead, and dresses in brand-name Lucifer Leather with an appropriately-sized forked codpiece. But their own reference manual says it's the opposite of that."

"You're saying that if everyone agrees something is evil, it's just as likely not?"

"Not exactly. I'm saying that when you find Satan, he'll probably look like Jesus Christ himself."

"And what does that have to do with Jack Parsons? Or abreaction therapy?" Sheri demanded, after a moment's thought.

"I have no idea. Just something that came to mind."

I signaled for the check.

(to be continued)

The Magician is the author of other episodes of the Jack Parsons story (<http://zolatimes.com/jparart/Aparmenu.html>).

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Jack Parsons &

The Curious Origins of the American Space Program

by The Magician

Part 5: Rocking to Amargi

Trisha spooned the arginine carefully into the grapefruit juice. Three teaspoons made about twelve grams. She added three more teaspoons of choline chloride mixed with pantothenic acid. She stirred the brew carefully, added water, then drank it fast, keeping her mind blank. She shuddered at the aftertaste.

Durk Pearson and Sandy Shaw were right, she thought. Arginine does taste like dead goat vomit.

She went to the bedroom and stood before the full-length mirror inspecting her body critically. High breasts giving way to a flat abdomen. Narrow waist, a widening at the hips, and long legs that were slightly muscular. The late afternoon sun coming through the window highlighted the reddish gold at her crotch. She thought a light trim was in order.

She locked her fingers behind her neck and pulled her hair up over her head. The golden blond mane overflowed the arc of her wrists and still easily covered her shoulders.

She would go tonight as Dejah Thoris, she thought. When she was growing up her father had read her Edgar Rice Burroughs' tales of Barsoom, and she had often imagined herself as Dejah Thoris, Princess of Helium. She had once asked her father for a jeweled dagger, which he purchased for her a few years later on her sixteenth birthday.

Well. Not quite as Dejah Thoris. As Dejah Thoris she would have worn an ornament for her hair, sandals, a simple belt to support her dagger, and nothing else. That was the difference between Philadelphia and Barsoom. For this party she would also wear a dress. Perhaps the sleeveless white one with the hemline that hung to her left ankle, but which was gathered up on the right side to end at her hip. The dagger would hang down at the side of her exposed thigh.

She was sure the effect would be stunning.

* * * * *

"So? What do we do for bread?" Roy demands.

"You tell me." Ezra spits on the sidewalk. "The drug deal won't fly, not with the cowboy ridin' herd down there."

They are leaning against a wall near 12th and South. The previous week they had put up a table near 3rd and collected signatures and money. "Committee for a Drug-Free South Street," the cardboard had read. They had taken in over three hundred dollars, a hundred for rent, and the rest blown in weekend partying.

"Let us pay a visit to that mother Two-Shoes. Jivin' us in the presence of the Man."

They contemplate the demise of Two-Shoes in silence, a strategic plan requiring careful thought.

Shit, you ain't no committee for a drug-free nothin', Two-Shoes says. The Man cocks his ear and gets nosy. Ezra makes up a phone number and as the Man saunters off on his horse they pack up and disappear.

"Maybe we should pluck some pussy off the street," Ezra says, and then Roy sees it too.

Coming down the block, the Cadillac of downtown pussy.

"Look at her dress, pulled up like that."

"Advertisin'," says Ezra.

Roy looks at the billowing blond hair, the sleeveless white dress, and the naked leg rhythmically flashing at him.

"Hey, lady," he says as she comes past. "Tell me how much and I'll knock over a bank."

He reaches out and touches her shoulder, to slow her down. He hardly senses her hand moving, just the sting that spreads through his arm.

He looks at the line drawn from his wrist to the inside of his left elbow. The line begins to fill with blood.

"Jesus, the bitch cut me."

To Ezra he sounds more awed than angry.

Roy stares at his arm as the blood begins to freely drip on the sidewalk.

"A little love nip," Ezra says.

Oblivious to his friend's plight, Ezra hurries to follow her.

* * * * *

"Get your methylxanthines here!" a voice cried.

The methyl hawker was a mobile concession stand, bright yellow cap and jacket, and loaded with white styrofoam.

"What do you recommend?" Homer Nilmot asked.

"Tea is your best bet, about 125 milligrams of caffeine, same as a cup of coffee, but it's a better stimulant because it also contains theophylline--the coronary vasodilator and antiasthmatic."

"What about the hot chocolate?"

"The chocolate has two methylxanthines, the diuretic drug theobromine and the stimulant caffeine. Mixed with sucrose, cinnamon, and vanilla, it is rich in carbohydrates and a source of quick energy."

After a moment's thought, Homer decided on the hot chocolate. He sipped the thick liquid and looked around the spacious open room that would later serve as the dance floor for the Mauvaises Arts Ball. It was early and people were mostly milling about, talking. Streamers, Chinese dragons, and inflated puppets dangled in mid-air. At either end of the floor were small raised platforms with podiums.

A woman was speaking on the far dais, but Homer couldn't distinguish anything she said over the babble of conversation. Above the dais, a pink neon sign flashed: "The truth shall make you free." Homer smiled. He knew the quotation. A thin man porting two large volumes was taking his place at the near podium.

Warbling from an old phonograph nearby was a cowboy song Homer had never before heard outside his father's ancient stack of 78s: "He turned his ol' belly right up to the sun. He sure was a sun-fishin' son-of-a-gun." *Strawberry Roan*.

Homer paused near a man wearing a superman outfit, in which the "S" had been replaced by "007." 007 was briefing a couple in medieval costume.

"The original 007 was John Dee, the leading scholar of the day, an occultist who served as a secret agent for

Queen Elisabeth I. At that time--the Sixteenth Century--England was challenging the number one sea power Spain. Dee not only kept track of Spanish naval preparations, but also helped create a defeatist atmosphere by spreading the rumor, through personal astrological forecasts he prepared for the King of Poland and the Emperor of Bohemia--knowing the predictions would be repeated abroad, that storms would cause the defeat of a great empire in 1588. Throughout Europe everyone understood the 'great empire' to be Spain, whose Armada was in fact defeated by the British in 1588. You might say it was simply a good weather forecast, but the prediction was widely believed and created a dearth of good sailors to man the Spanish ships. Powerful, effective propaganda. Dee also cast the Queen's horoscope and set the date for her coronation.

"Dee introduced cryptography into the spy network run by Sir Francis Walsingham, and signed his own occult communications 007, the number later adopted by Ian Fleming in his James Bond novels. Ian Fleming served as assistant to the director of British naval intelligence during World War II, and knew that Dee was one of the founding fathers of his own organization. It was Ian Fleming, incidentally, who in 1943 conceived of the plan to have Aleister Crowley question Rudolf Hess, when Hess made his famous flight from Germany to England. Fleming thought Crowley was just the right person to gather information on the occult activities of the Nazis."

"This John Dee was some sort of college professor?" the medieval woman asked.

"He was the most learned man of his time, not surprising considering his personal library contained almost ten times as many books as the Cambridge University library. Dee wrote the preface to the first English translation of Euclid's *Elements*, itself the most famous mathematical treatise in history. Unfortunately, Dee was smeared by the religious establishment because he devised a flying machine for a production of

Aristophanes' play *Peace*. They couldn't understand how it worked, so they charged that Dee was in league with demons. He had also been imprisoned for a time by Queen Mary, because he was suspected of employing enchantments against her.

"Afterward, Dee was patronized by Queen Elisabeth, but when she died she was succeeded by James I, who was obsessed with witchcraft, even writing a book on the subject based on his personal investigations. He's the same King James who had the Bible translated into English. James' obsession with witches, incidentally, is the reason for the infamous King James translation, or mistranslation, 'Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.' Under King James, witch-hunters had full reign, and Dee was eventually forced to step down as Warden of Manchester College."

"So Dee was just a scholar, maligned because he was ahead of his time?"

"Well, to be sure, like most of the leading intellects of that age, he had a personal interest in the occult. Fascination with the occult also seems to be endemic to the intelligence profession. Through his sycophant Edward Kelley, an Irish rogue who was nevertheless a genuine medium, Dee held conversations with diverse spirits. Some would later claim that Kelley used these channeling sessions as a way of manipulating Dee."

A slender girl wearing cat's ears moved past. She was hanging on to a pony-tailed behemoth in a Tuxedo. "Les vertus se perdent dans l'interet," she whispered pointedly, "comme les fleuves se perdent dans la mer."

The man at the near podium had begun to speak. "I refer you to the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography, *Final Report*, July 1986, Volume 2.

"According to official U.S. government statistics, the magazine *Teeny Tits, Big Boobs to Chew & Suck On* contains, and I quote, 'Thirty- seven photographs of a

partially clothed caucasian female exposing her breasts and her vagina; Twelve photographs of a partially clothed caucasian female exposing her breasts and inserting a finger or fingers into her vagina; Four photographs of a partially clothed caucasian female exposing her breasts and her buttocks; Three close-up photographs of a caucasian female's vagina spread open with her fingers.'

"Ho hum, you say? Another nebulous piece of government sociometry, to be filed and forgotten along with the balance on merchandise trade? Not so! For independent surveys by private researchers indicate the magazine in question actually contains thirty- eight photographs of a partially clothed caucasian female exposing her breasts and her vagina. So why the miscount in this official document? Why the deliberate falsification of an important statistic?

"I submit that we have here before us one more example of government cover-up . . ."

Homer continued to circulate. A new record played on the phonograph: "Stray in the bunch, and the boss said kill it. I shot it in the rump with the handle of a skillet. Come a ti yi yippie, come a ti yi yippie yippie yea."

"You see, we had gone out to Bird-In-Hand and Intercourse to sample the shoo-fly pie," said a Horus-faced man sporting a mohawk.

Homer inspected the small group, paying particular attention to a svelte female in a bikini.

"Then in the afternoon we went back to her aunt's place near King of Prussia where they were having a yard party. It was mostly a group of wealthy, liberal, new-age Pennsylvania Dutch, and someone started talking about the new wave of Hitlermania in European publishing and how terrible it all was. You would think they were personally responsible for what happened in Germany in the 1940s.

"I found the fake emotion a little obnoxious, so I said one man's culture is another man's disease. First I said that the Nazis learned at the feet of the masters, that most of the evil Hitler did, he learned by reading the Old Testament. Genocide? I said. Where do you think Hitler got the idea? Yahweh told the ancient Israelites to wipe out every man, woman, and child when they conquered the land of Canaan he had `given' them. Kill a Canaanite, win a homestead. When once they spared a few people, Yahweh smote them for rebellion.

"Racial purity? Yahweh told them not to take wives of the surrounding peoples. Stay away from inferior goyish shiksas, Yahweh said. If that's not master race propaganda, I don't know what is, I said.

"The thousand-year reich? Hitler got that phrase from Martin Luther's translation of the Book of Revelation, which was an early Jewish apocalyptic work adopted as part of the New Testament canon.

"Now I was really rolling, so I told them that history was on Hitler's side. A United Europe? That's what Hitler wanted and it's all the rage these days with European left-wing intellectuals. Hitler took the one government, one economy, one currency idea one step further, and planned also for a common language. Now Europe's got it, although the language is English, much to the disgust of the French.

"A one-world global village? McLuhan was describing what Shicklgruber started. Technology accelerated under the Nazis, with the beginnings of space rockets and continent-wide electronic communication links.

"Then I got personal. I pointed out that some SS leaders were into vegetarianism and right-brained Eastern philosophy, not to mention consciousness-altering drugs like hashish, peyote, amphetamines and cocaine. Change your mind and you'll change the world. The SS understood that, or at least the leaders did.

"All in all, I said, Hitler was a man ahead of his time, a man of the 1980's, but suffering under the Neanderthal baggage he picked up from the Bible. Like many futants, he turned into a maniacal killer.

"That set them back, all right," Horus-face finished smugly.

"So what did they say?" asked the girl in the bikini.

"Oh, some of them were pretty pissed. They didn't believe that part about SS leaders being vegetarian."

There were large foam rubber cushions and bean bags arranged along the walls. Homer settled down on one, closed his eyes, and let the voices wash over him.

"I have this friend who works at a Philadelphia bank who's been mugged four times," a girl's voice was saying.

"Really? *Four* times?"

"Around that. He just *looks* like the archetypical chronic victim. He wears his body like a provocative sign: 'Please don't mug me.' People see this guy coming from a block away, and get the instant urge to beat the hell out of him."

The voice at the podium continued: ". . . A group of dedicated men and women putting your tax dollars to good use, hours and hours of grueling work, watching pornographic films on your behalf, all in the interest of science and the future of America. Here, beginning on page 1573, is a listing of the actual films viewed and studied by the Commission."

The speaker began to enunciate the list in a stentorian voice. "A Coming of Angels. A Few Good Men. A Girl Like That. A Lacy Affair. A License to Thrill. A Little Dynasty. A Little Sex in the Night. A Married Man. A Matter of Size . . ."

With his eyes closed, Homer could perceive the sounds of the room as a single standing wave of energy, which pulsed and crackled. Then he detected a tremor, the arrival of a second modulating wave. Homer opened his eyes and saw the Goddess in the doorway.

As Trisha paused, surveying the room, a refreshments boy wearing yellow cap and jacket appeared. He obviously had instructions to approach every new guest. He was flustered by her presence but rallied to the occasion.

"Adam, Madam?" he asked.

Trisha raised her eyebrows.

"Ecstasy, MDMA. Methylendioxyethylamphetamine returns you to the Garden of Eden. You see the world with new and innocent eyes. You gain an emotional empathy with everything around you. But you don't have to worry about dissolving into the cosmic glue, because it strengthens your ego and makes you feel good about yourself. You can think and dance normally, while having your heart filled with love."

The refreshments boy saw that Trisha was regarding him with amusement. It made him feel like a street preacher pushing Jesus.

"I'm always that way anyway," she said. "I don't need it. Besides, it inhibits orgasm."

"No, you wouldn't want that," he mumbled as she moved past him. He felt faint.

Trisha spotted an enclave with Colin Bass, the M.D. at Pennsylvania Hospital from whom she obtained prescription pharmaceuticals. The circle opened to admit her as she moved closer.

"In the late 1800's health faddists said you were

supposed to eat natural, wholesome foods, get plenty of exercise, and abstain from sex," Colin was saying. "Good diet, good exercise, and good sex. Just like today, except proper sex then meant no sex. Kellogg's Corn Flakes, for example, were created by John Harvey Kellogg in the 1890's with the intention they would help eliminate harmful sexual desires. Mothers could perform no higher duty than to see their sons start the day off with a fresh bowl of antimasturbation corn flakes. Kellogg's own marriage to a nursing student at his sanitarium went unconsummated. Instead he spent his honeymoon writing a book about the evils of sex. On the other hand, he did have an orderly administer him an enema every morning after breakfast."

Behind her, Trisha heard a man's voice reciting a list of films. ". . . Debbie Does Dallas. Debbie Does `em All. Debbie's Fantasy. Debbi's Confession. Deep Chill. Deep Passage. Deep Roots. Deep Throat. Deep Thrust. Delicious. Deliveries in the Rear. Delivery Boys. Der Lang Finger. Der Perverse Onkel. Der Sex-Spion. Desire for Men. Desiree. Desiree Lane. Desires of the Devil. . ."

"Well," Trisha said, "medical malady or no, perhaps it's better to keep sex slightly immoral, non-casual, hence preserving its air of excitement and privilege for the aristocracy who dare defy the Gods."

"The next stage of sexual evolution is technological," pronounced a short curly-haired punk in a Rambo T-shirt. "Imagine this total environment, a multi-sensorily controlled bedroom, set up with biofeedback equipment and closed circuit holography, programmed to respond to your every mood and generate the ultimate sexual trip with real or imaginary partners."

"We already got that," Colin responded. "It's called the central nervous system and it can organize your experience into pretty much any shape you can imagine."

"Then something went wrong with my programming," a girl said. "The more sex I have, the less I like it."

"Remember you are the programmer as well as the program."

"So what should I do?"

"Maybe you should have less sex. Abstinence makes the heart grow fonder, and all that."

"But isn't the lack of sex the root of all evil?"

"No, you've got it mixed up." A man in horned-rim glasses spoke up. "What Freud said was the lack of a good analyst is the root of all evil. A good analyst will provide you with all the sex you need."

"Ever since I read Philip Jose Farmer's book *The Lovers*, I've wanted to have sex with an alien." Rambo again.

"Aren't you afraid of catching something?" Oriental girl, genuinely curious. "Some kind of galactic gonorrhoea?"

"Many men after ufo observations report a soreness in the testicles," responded a big man in a Tux. "Maybe that's what they have. They're suffering the biological after-effects of an experiment in inter-species breeding."

"It happens to women too," the Oriental girl said. "I read about a woman in California named Marian Greenberg who became pregnant from extraterrestrials. She wrote a book about it. She hadn't had sex for months when it happened. It's like the sons of God seeing the daughters of men, that they were beautiful, and through them begetting the Nephilim. "

"Yes, I read that same story. But didn't she share a hot tub with this guy before she became pregnant? Maybe it

wasn't extraterrestrials. It could have been subterraneans." Trisha.

As the group pondered the possibilities, Trisha looked across the room and saw Ezra standing in the door to the kitchen.

Following Trisha up 13th, Ezra sees her disappear into Dirty Frank's. He enters from the corner, and stands for a moment looking at the dingy tables and the beaten up bar. Redneck song on the juke box. In the back above the video games he sees cabinets, doors ajar, stacked with cases of beer. A baseball game is in progress on the blurry TV screen. The painted wall opposite is covered with pictures, in contrast to the dilapidated one behind him, which displays only Budweiser and St. Pauli Girl signs. Why don't they spread the pictures around, make it look classy, he wonders. Overhead fans circulate a general smell of disinfectant which permeates the room despite two doors open to the street. Ezra feels comfortable here. He walks around the bar to a spot near Trisha, who is seated at the table nearest the video games.

Also at the table is a man in a business suit, a mulatto girl, and a swarthy fellow with a small mustache. Ezra hears them call the suit man Eric. Eric has only stopped by for a few drinks. "I know my wife is going to kill me when I get home. She always yells at me when I get smashed," he says as he drains his glass. He smiles at Trisha.

"No wonder you drink, a bitch like that," the girl sitting beside him speaks up. "Here. Let me get you a cajun martini. That'll pick you up."

"Did I tell you about the hangover I had last week?" he asks her.

Keeping an eye on Trisha, Ezra feels in his pocket and finds he has enough change for a beer. He sips the brew and hears her say she is going to an old warehouse

down near the bridge. Then she is out the door and into a taxi. Ezra grabs his bottle, rushes out to the street, and watches the cab disappear.

He drains the bottle and throws it into an alley. Then he walks over to Market, down to 4th, and turns left toward the bridge. Some weirdly dressed people drive by, and he follows the car up the street. They get out in front of an old building. There is a bouncer at the door, checking tickets.

Ezra watches people go in for a while, then walks around to the back, finds an open window, and climbs through it into a kitchen. He helps himself to the shrimp until scolded away, then walks to the kitchen door and looks out into a large room.

Colin was speaking again. "That's right, the FDA's Recommended Daily Allowances are based on no scientific evidence whatsoever. Instead they calculated the minimum amount which will keep you from getting a known vitamin deficiency disease. Like scurvy. Say 20 milligrams of Vitamin C. Then they add a small margin, say 40 mg. So they set 60 mg of C as the RDA. There's not the slightest evidence that 60 is the optimal amount. It's based on the 19th century notion that you get all the nutrition you need from balanced meals--balanced meals being whatever the average Joe eats. So as long as you don't have scurvy you're getting the optimal amount of C, or whatever."

Settled back on his cushion, Homer was watching Trisha. Gradually the impression came to him that everyone was watching her. Not staring, just being aware she was there.

Two YMCA types had positioned themselves on the neighboring bean bag. "But if you're always looking for something, you'll never find it. Just when I thought I would be a bachelor all my life this girl comes along and I find we have a lot in common."

"I gave you numbers to call," the other one said.

"Yeah, but I don't like to pay for it."

"I know, but if you're going with girls and calling up other girls and paying for it, then you feel more relaxed. It's not like you're begging for it. You know my philosophy on that."

Now a couple was blocking his line of sight. Homer shifted so he once more had a clear view of the Goddess. If I can't have that woman, I'll die, he whispered to himself. But he was too cynical to believe either that he would ever have her, or that he would actually die from wanting.

". . . Hot Action. Hot Blooded. Hot Bodies. Hot Cars, Nasty Women. Hot Chocolate. Hot Circuit. Hot Close Ups. Hot Country. Hot Cunt Service. Hot Dallas Nights. Hot Dogs. Hot Dreams. Hot for Cash. Hot Fudge. Hot Girls in Love. Hot Gypsy Love. Hot, High, and Horny. Hot Jobs. Hot Legs. Hot Line. Hot Lunch. Hot Merchandise. Hot Nights & Hard Bodies. Hot Number. Hot Nurses. Hot off the Press. Hot Pants. Hot Pursuit. Hot Pink. Hot Rockers. Hot Roomers. Hot School Reunion. Hot Shots. Hot Spa. Hot Spanking. Hot Spots. Hot Spur. Hot Tails. Hot Touch. Hot Wire. Hot Wired Vanessa. Hotel Hooker. Hotline. Hotter than Hell. Hottest Hunks. House of Ill-Repute. . ."

The couple before him were engaged in an animated discussion.

"And what's more, you eat too fast," the girl said.

"I don't like to talk that much when I'm eating."

"And you walk too slow."

"I walk for pleasure, not exercise. When I exercise, I jog or work out in a gym."

"Besides you're in business. I don't think I could ever respect anyone who does that for a living."

"Jesus, Gloria, you're a nurse yourself."

"I'm helping people."

"Do you ever treat people who are in business? Or what about the hospital you work? Isn't that a business? What if no one paid their bills, or paid your salary?"

"You just don't understand what I mean. Because you never listen to me."

"I'm listening now."

"And you're always arguing. You argue about everything I say."

The man in horn-rimmed glasses was speaking passionately. "All the signs point to AIDS being a designer disease, engineered by genetic manipulation, and spread--by design or by accident-- under the cover of public inoculation. Look at the patterns. The incidence of infection in Africa corresponds to the precise location of the smallpox vaccination program conducted in the mid-1970's by the World Health Organization. And the appearance of AIDS among Haitians can be attributed to the same source, since there were 14,000 Haitians then on UN secondment to Central Africa who also received the vaccine. AIDS gets to New York City by a similar process--the Hepatitis B vaccine study in 1978. Six years later, 64 percent of those in the study had AIDS, and the percentage is probably higher now. Interesting enough, back in 1969 the Biological Warfare division of the U. S. Department of Defense requested funds at a House Appropriations hearing to develop genetically a disease that would attack the human immune system. What do you think happened? They got the money from Congress, the same idiots who are now being asked to spend funds on a cure."

We had barely gotten inside the door to the Mauvaises Arts Ball when Sheri had to rush off to the bathroom. While I was waiting for her to return, a waiter appeared. He looked at my Levis and running shoes.

"You look like a businessman," he said. "Perhaps some dimethyltryptamine?"

He offered me a platter with marijuana joints neatly arranged like carrot sticks. I assumed the DMT had been rolled into the ends of the joints.

"What else you got?"

"A mescaline mix." He indicated the peyote buttons in the wooden bowl in the center of the display. "These will reveal to you a small green man, Mescalito, whose photo appears on Peter Pan peanut butter jars, but who is occasionally mistaken as a little green alien from Mars.

"Finally, there are psilocybin mushrooms, the fungus of choice for discriminating shamans."

I took one of the joints and slipped it into my shirt pocket. In some parts of the country, it would have been tacky to help yourself to a little of everything. But this was Philadelphia, so I took some peyote buttons and mushrooms also. You never knew when an emergency might arise, or what you could trade them for.

There was a man on an elevated platform who had been reading a list of names. He now paused. "You must remember that despite the countless hours spent in viewing and analyzing this genre of film, it is a matter of record that no male member of the Attorney General's Commission experienced an unseemly erection, nor was any female member forced in the course of her duties to put on dry underwear. This in itself is testimony to the dedication and high moral purpose of the Commission." He returned to the recitation of the list.

". . . Piercing of Laura. Private Nurses. Private Party. Private Pleasures. Private Practice. Private Teacher. Prized Possession. Pro Ball Cheerleaders. Probation Officer's Discipline. Programmed for Pleasure. Project: Ginger. Prunella. Public Affair. Punished. Purely Physical. Puss N Boots. . ."

While waiting for Sheri, I looked around the room for Homer Nilmot, and amused myself by eavesdropping on the desultory conversations. Trans-Global had relayed the message that Homer would meet me here.

"If it weren't for Fred, I could have gotten my degree and really gone somewhere. I could be teaching sociology now."

"If it weren't for Fred, you would have flunked out of college in six months. Everybody knows your rush to get married was an excuse to avoid exams."

"Der volkische Staat hat die Rasse in den Mittelpunkt des allgemeinen Lebens zu setzen."

"I dreamed last night that I became the head of a nuclear power station. Only the reactor was missing. It was in some place like New Mexico, and everything was in a state of decay, with crumbling walls like those at an old castle I had seen near Salisbury in England. I, or a group of us, had stormed the place and taken it over, then I was in charge and I felt very confident. A military group came by with orders for an inspection, and I could barely repress a smile because only I knew there was no reactor to inspect. In addition they didn't know that the personnel had changed (that is, that we had taken over), and were under the delusion that I might actually care about their orders. But I let the leader of the group in to look around. There were also other people coming and going, and two girls showed up and started to accompany us on the tour. Then the girls were naked with white trimmings where their bathing suits had been. A guy and one of the girls began

kissing, and I knew that the second girl and I would get around to that too. But then the first girl and I began kissing, and the second girl got angry. I soothed her feelings, and then they were both kissing me and I woke up."

"Science overthrew theology and assumed the post of infallibility. Now it cites the warfare of science with theology the same way the government cites the ideals of the Revolution. Tyranny reigns under the rubric of freedom."

"Joe definitely has the biggest mortgage in our office. He must pay three thousand a month in interest alone."

"I always thought he had that look about him. A man with a purpose, a man with responsibilities."

"Well he does. He got a thirty-year mortgage. He'll be paying on it till 2014."

"I wish my Arthur could do something like that. He has hardly any debts because he can't get any credit."

"An infinite set is a set that can be put on a one-to-one correspondence with a proper subset of itself. For example, the natural numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, . . . can be matched one-for-one with the even numbers 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, . . ., since 1 matches with 2, 2 matches with 4, 3 matches with 6, and so on. The number n matches with the number $2n$. Therefore there is a sense in which we can say that all the natural numbers are contained in the set of even numbers. In a similar way, a hologram can be matched with a proper subset of itself. Suppose you have a hologram of the Philadelphia Museum of Art and Fairmont Park. You can throw it all away except for a piece, but from that piece you can reconstruct the entire original hologram. Thus each part can be said to contain the whole image of the museum and the park, and the whole image can be examined by looking at only a tiny portion."

"He was the type of guy who was always spilling french fries in his lap."

"She was weeping and cursing when I vaulted into her brain."

"We can't get it all together. It *is* all together."

"I don't practice what I preach because I'm not the kind of person I'm preaching to."

"The classic double-bind theory of Gregory Bateson can be illustrated by the mother who tells her kid to quit imitating Johnny and to be himself. Of course the kid, left to himself, had the spontaneous inclination to imitate Johnny, but now he's told this is not being himself. Thus, by definition, he's wrong no matter what he does, and this circuit of insanity gets imprinted in his mind."

"Crotchless underwear?"

"If you look at a Cadillac today, and you look at a Cadillac tomorrow, there's a little bit of difference."

"That's true. You can't step into the same Cadillac twice."

"I just had a tissue donor from Doylestown."

"How could a boogey man be in my house?"

"Boogey men have lots of keys."

"You'll pay to know what you really think."

"Careful analysis by the President's Commission notes the paperback book *Tying Up Rebecca* contains, on the inside cover, an advertisement for Stallion Slo-Cum Spray. This official document states, `A photograph of the product is on this page and printed below the photograph is "Get it up and keep it up!" A three

paragraph narrative explains its application and why it's needed. The price is \$10.00 and an order form has been supplied on page 192.' "

Ezra stops a passing waiter. "Can you get me some of that slokum spray?"

"No, but I do have a nice mixture of cocaine and phenylalanine. It's rolled in a coconut macaroon for oral ingestion."

Ezra eyes the concoction. "How about a beer?" he asks cautiously.

"Sorry, hard drugs you have to buy yourself." The waiter points to the cash bar in the corner.

"Lawyers are living proof cowboys fuck sheep."

"Backward ran the sentences until reeled the mind."

"I was parked on Sansom street and someone vandalized my car, threw a rock through a window, left glass all over the inside. I called the police to report it, and they asked if anything was missing. I said no, didn't appear to be. Then it occurred to me it would be better to have something missing. So I said a camera, a Polaroid, had disappeared."

"Would Jesus take a urine test?"

"He said render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

"Well, whose urine is it, God's or Caesar's?"

"And now we come to the Attorney General's official synoptical review of the movie *Forgive Me I Have Sinned*.

"A male dressed in a robe is seated behind some lattice

work with smoke surrounding him. The young girl, who is dressed in what looks like a parochial school uniform, stands on the other side of the lattice work.

"Who are you, she asks?

"Tell me about the sins of the flesh, the man says.

"What do you want me to say? The girl moves closer to the lattice work.

"You little fool. Tell me of your sins if you want to be forgiven.

"It was when Serena and I went camping. It was so much fun. The campfire was warm. I was so tired, my sleeping bag was so warm. I just went to sleep. I dreamt Serena was touching me.

"How was she touching you? How did she touch you?

"She touched my face. She touched me with her hands and her mouth. She kissed me. And then she moved her hands further down and I couldn't breathe.

"Tell me more how you've sinned. . . .

"She put her hands between my legs and I felt all warm and strange. . . ."

I worked my way to the far side of the room, where I spotted Homer Nilmot looking at a neon sign above the head of an intense young woman at a podium.

"Plainly put," the woman was saying, "the Mark of the Beast is a designation without which no man can buy or sell. Buying and selling requires money. Most money exists in the form of checking accounts. Ever try to open a checking account without giving the bank your social security number? Your SS number goes on your employment record, your tax record, your school record, and the data files for all your credit cards, your

driver's license and your passport. It serves as a general universal identifier, a mark, which is computer coded to keep track of all your financial and other important activities.

"A social security number is just the embryonic beginning of the Beast system. At the European Economic Community's three-story computer complex in Luxembourg, an attempt is being made to assign every man, woman, and child on the face of the earth an 18-digit number, that is 6 + 6 + 6 digits. Interestingly, the computer complex itself is commonly referred to as 'the Beast.' "

This was my kind of good rant. I liked this woman. She continued.

"I refer you to the eye-opening book, *When Your Money Fails . . . the "666 System" is here*, by Mary Stewart Relfe, Ph.D. The cover notes that this work has been called 'one of the most astounding books of this generation,' by Colin Deal, author of the best seller *Christ Returns by 1988*.

"This fine work points out that that the first war ship which entered the newly re-opened Suez Canal in June 1975 carried on its deck Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, and on its bow the number 666. It also says that all Arab-owned vehicles in Jerusalem must carry the license prefix '666' in order that Israel may be able to quickly identify the enemy if war breaks out. . ."

By this time I had reached Homer. All I wanted was to explain the trip to California--to continue the Jack Parsons investigation--and verify Trans-Global would pay expenses, a task I managed to accomplish despite acoustical chaos. The important work done, I indicated the sign above the girl.

"How about you? Do you know the Truth?" I asked.

"Yeah. Known it for years," Homer said.

"Has it make you free?"

"Not really. I had to fire my God because he wasn't doing his job."

Homer looked thoughtful. "When I was at college," he said, "sophomores would sneak into the restrooms some nights at the start of the school year, and put these signs above the urinals. On the signs would be a single biblical reference: I Kings 21:21. It was an old joke, but new Freshmen wouldn't have heard about it yet and would go and look it up."

"And what does the reference say?"

"Every man that pisseth against the wall shall be cut off."

"With respect to the number 666, elementary gematria reveals . . .," continued the girl at the podium. But gematria's revelation was aborted, for at that moment the room darkened, and a booming voice overrode all competition.

"Welcome ladies and gentlemen, not to mention all you idolators, whoremongers, dogs, insensitives, unbelievers, effeminate, abusers, sorcerers, despisers of government, fornicators, and blasphemers. And greetings, too, to those unclean, unsanctified, puffed up with knowledge, or holding political office. A toast to Apocalypse Culture! The End Time is here! It's here NOW! So tonight it's fitting that we begin the first annual Mauvaises Arts Ball with a prophetic PLAGUE FROM HEAVEN!"

A shower of hailstones fell from the ceiling. A woman near me shrieked as ice slid down her ample cleavage. Then the room went completely black, and from the four walls came a thunder clap, the voice of Grace Slick: "Every night I rock myself to sleep."

The song was over before a slight illumination reappeared. Just enough light to make out the facial features of the person next to you if you looked carefully. I felt a tug at my arm. It was Sheri and with her was another girl, of medium height, with a wild mane of hair that shot out in all directions.

I missed her name, but I caught the warmth given off by her body as we stood toe to toe for introductions.

As above so below.

Random thoughts kept popping into my head.

Sheri had left again to talk to a fellow Sub-Genius, the ranter with the inside scoop on the 666 system. For reasons unknown Sheri had set me up with the girl with the wild hair. Why, didn't seem important at the moment.

We began to dance. It was crowded and it seemed natural I would lace my fingers at the small of her back and pull her close. Angel means messenger. Her reaction was unexpected. She simply leaned her forehead into my shoulder and pressed her stomach and pelvis against me. We danced some more, body to body. She was wearing a strange perfume that was heady, erotic. What we require is an angelology of words.

After a while I slid my hands down on her hips, feeling their rhythm. She turned her face upward in invitation, and as I kissed her, she slipped her hand under my shirt and ran her fingers up and down my side.

Words are angels, independent carriers of soul. She unbuttoned my shirt. I shifted uncomfortably in my Levis, and started to pull away. But she adjusted to the motion, keeping her pelvis pressed against me as I stepped backward. The powder developed by Jack Parsons using roofing tar and sodium perchlorate was known as GALCIT 53. At this point I lost all desire to

slow the course of events. In the darkness I began to roll her skirt up under my fingers until I reached the hem. Then I slipped a hand underneath the elastic of her panties, and caressed the cleavage between her hips. She shifted her right hand around to my back, clinging to me, standing on tiptoes and pushing her breasts forward. The slightest nudge would have toppled us over.

We were both breathing hard. I realized we were standing beside a cushion, and I sat back on it and pulled her down on top of me. I was dimly aware that we were not the only couple making use of the darkness. She sat astraddle my thighs, and began to unfasten my Levis. I rolled her over to the side and slipped a hand into her panties. She pressed against my fingers as I explored her body. If the present is intolerable, and the future is inaccessible, only the past can furnish models for change that can be communicated to a mass population with relative ease.

Then I pulled her panties off entirely, slipping them over her shoes. I leaned back on the cushion and pushed my Levis down to my knees, and she straddled me again and slipped me inside her. It was a slow number and we got into a rhythm of sorts with the music. Our life is less the resultant of pressures and forces than the enactment of mythical scenarios. I wanted to pull her dress completely off, but I yielded to prudence and contented myself with unbuttoning the front to caress her breasts. She had her hand down between us, exploring the connection, monitoring the thrusts, and massaging us both. Then she leaned forward over me, shaking her head from side to side in orgasm.

I was in no hurry. The longer this lasted the better. But she abruptly pulled off me, then turned and took me into her mouth. By considering the personified archetypes as Gods, they become recognizable as persons, each with styles of consciousness or typical modes of apprehension. The insistence of her lips and fingers made me come almost immediately. I guess it was just as well, because the voice of the master of

ceremonies intruded to state this would be the last number before the channeling session by Helen Morley. I pulled up my Levis and she buttoned her dress as the lights began to brighten. She gave me a kiss, and as she did so I spied her panties, which were still lying on the floor. She smiled when I handed them to her, and walked away carrying them in her hand. I watched her cross the room and exit through a door on the other side.

Finally I looked around me and I saw Sheri standing a few feet away, contemplating me behind an expressionless mask.

"Not I was the cause of this act, but Zeus and my portion and the Erinys who walks in darkness: they it was who in the assembly put wild *ate* in my understanding," I quoted.

"Helen can't channel unless she's just had sex," Sheri said matter- of-factly.

"That was Helen Morley?"

Sheri nodded.

"So what could I do? Deity will always have its way." But I couldn't help asking: "What if I hadn't been available?"

Sheri didn't bother to comment.

Later, after the lights had darkened, a there had been a moment's silence, Helen Morley began to talk about new light from the sun and the time of coming Earth changes.

It was weird and garbled stuff, but seemed quite in keeping with the rest of the evening.

"The Earth will begin to receive light with a new frequency. This increase in intensity of the frequency of

energy will produce a different life, which will be lived in a different way from the one known today. This means that the cycle of life on Earth will be totally and radically changed, because of the inevitable mutations which will result at the electro-chemical- molecular level. Other forms will be given to the animal and vegetable kingdoms. Man will undergo a change in the force field which structures him."

She was talking in a microchip-simulated voice, like those in new model cars that tell you your seat belt is unfastened.

"Every man, as vivified by energy, has his own determined force field, which is the etheric body, or the soul--the psychic energy which structures the material form. The good quality force field of man is capable of bearing, without any damage to matter, any kind of change in frequency of energy, which determines a new time where different values exist. But if the organism is a chaotic vibrator of exterior effects, produced by excessive human emotivities (hate, malice, envy, egoism, hypocrisy, fear, etc.), the syntony with values of the Universal Force Field will then go through major distortions, distortions which would make any energetic power change unbearable to the cellular system.

"Survival, therefore, is for those who, by their spiritual evolution, have attained a physical structure and psychic frequency which harmonizes with the Superior Force Field coming from the sun in an energetic form. The increase in power of the energy coming from the sun will also produce a certain effect in the mental field of the humans: what is negative will become more negative, and what is positive will acquire a greater syntony. When this energy, which is spiritual, is in discord with the mind, a short-circuit is produced in the organism and certain fuses blow.

"This will lead to an exaggeration of violence and evil in general, a progressive degeneration of the remaining moral, ethical, social, religious, and spiritual values by which the human society is still structured. The few

people whose individual force field is in syntony with the values of the Universal Force Field will have to struggle in order to keep away from the negative solicitations emitted by the human masses, who are caught in the crazy whirlpool of a destructive, uncontrollable, and non-preventable delirium."

"Sounds like she's talking about all of us," I said to Sheri. "The chaotic vibrators of exterior effects were driven to the Mauvaises Artes Ball."

"Yeah, well, what do you think about Helen Morley as New Age prophetess?"

"At least there's no ectoplasm. But she seems to be more interested in frequencies than freedom," I said. "I think I liked her better with her panties off."

I shut up then, because I saw that Helen was looking at us, as though in some supernatural way she had overheard our conversation. She began walking toward us--toward me--her eyes in a parallel focus, looking at a distant point beyond my head.

She stopped a couple of feet away. "They have given me a message for you," she said.

I waited, conscious of the watchful eyes of the surrounding people. When she didn't speak, I finally decided she was waiting for a reply.

"Okay, I'm ready for the message."

"You have to separate the wheat from the chaff," she said.

I started to laugh out loud, but then I realized the room had changed.

I was looking out a window, across a valley, to an adjacent hill. There before me were the walls of Jerusalem's Old City.

(to be continued)

The Magician is the author of other episodes of the Jack Parsons story (<http://zolatimes.com/jparart/Aparmenu.html>).

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Jack Parsons &

The Curious Origins of the American Space Program

by The Magician

Part 6: Exodus

From the window of his room in the King David Hotel he could see the walls of Jerusalem's Old City on the adjacent hill. The valley lying below, separating him from the Jaffa Gate, was Hinnom, better known as Gehenna or Hell. The prophet Jeremiah had predicted a slaughter in Hinnom, and the name had since become a metaphor for divine punishment. The valley extended to his right, southward, then curved eastward around Mt. Zion, where it would eventually meet the Kidron Valley below the archaeological ruins of the City of David.

Hell isn't so terrible, he thought. Just a lot of bad press.

The previous night he hadn't needed to play a role because he had *felt* like a bloody tourist. He had investigated the hotel bar, in search of companionship, but the few girls passing through were Americans primarily interested in New York-Jerusalem comparative shopping values. Then he had gone to a French restaurant where the service had been adequate, but the entrees were of mediocre quality and flagrantly overpriced. The wine list consisted of a smattering of domestic Israeli varieties that tasted like shoe polish. Afterward he had discovered the management wouldn't accept the local currency, the shekel, in payment: he had to use scarce dollars.

Next he had asked a cab driver to take him somewhere there was live music, and they had driven several miles in the fog to a club at the top of a mountain, where there

was a dance floor and a three-piece band. He had sipped a sabra liqueur, and watched a youthful clique who were drinking, dancing, and occasionally retiring outside to smoke hashish. Then she had appeared, and he had forgotten why he was here.

"Where did the hotel say to go to hear a live band?" she had asked.

"Nowhere, really. They said there wasn't much in Jerusalem, because Jerusalem is a holy city. There is a disco or two, but as for live performances other than concerts, it's mostly just tourist shows consisting of folk songs."

She had laughed at the peculiar notion of holiness, the musical voice reverberating within the room. "In ancient times what was holy was demarcated by singing and dancing. Primitive religion was mostly about sex, which is the principal affirmation of life; and drugs, which are doorways to another world--the realm of Gods, spirits, and the dead. Both are properly experienced in the company of music."

At that point there was no way he would have refused her invitation. She had given him precise instructions.

Playing a role? He wasn't sure what he meant by that. Who he was and why he was here kept tugging at the edge of his mind, but whenever he turned his attention in that direction, it fluttered away, out of grasp. At other times he had the impression he was someone else. But that, too, made no sense without a clear basis for comparison.

Now it was time. He turned from the window to pick up the paper sack, carefully closed the door of the room behind him, and walked down the red-carpeted stairs from the fourth floor. He pushed through the revolving door of the lobby, declining the doorman's offer of a taxi, and glanced briefly at the YMCA across the street before turning right down David Hamelech. After a

while he turned to his right again, into a street that descended between rows of one- and two-story abandoned buildings before rising up to the outer wall of the Old City.

A stray cat ventured out of the rubble of a building into the edge of the sunlight. He paused to speak to it, glancing carefully back up the street as he did so. Then, as the cat scrambled away, he stepped into the dark interior of the stone structure and waited quietly for a few minutes. Cars passed occasionally in either direction but there was nothing else. He emptied the sack and quickly donned a cloak made from coarse brown cloth. Then he folded a kufiyah and fitted it on his head with an aakal made of stiff rope.

He crossed Yafo, entered Jaffa Gate, and joined a stream of similarly clad figures headed down the narrow passageways of David and Chain Streets, which were also crowded with merchants, shoppers, tourists and soldiers. The Islamic faithful, on their way to prayer, would pass on through the Gate of the Chain entrance to the Haram es- Sharif, the Temple Mount, where they would enter the western door to the Dome of the Rock. There, beside the Foundation Stone where Abraham had prepared to sacrifice Isaac, and from which Mohammed had ascended to heaven, they would kneel with heads pointed southward, toward Mecca.

Shortly before reaching the Gate of the Chain, however, he turned abruptly to the left, along El-Wad, and then turned left again on Via Dolorosa. Near the Church of the Holy Sepulchre he entered a doorway, walked across the room, and knocked at a second door.

After a moment the door opened and a hand pulled him inside. Without saying a word the heavily robed figure placed a hood over his head, shielding what little vision he might have had, and led him through a maze of corridors. When the hood was removed he found himself in a chamber where a candle revealed an opening in the floor. A wooden ladder descended into the rock. The figure pulled back the cloth from around

its face, and he saw it was her. She motioned him to follow her down the ladder.

At the foot of the ladder the passageway continued its downward slope, then leveled off before reaching an open room that glowed with a dim blue light. He caught the smell of incense and the faint strains of a female vocal choir. He looked at the pillared walls and the perfectly formed statue in surprise.

"Where are we?" he asked.

"Beneath the Church of the Holy Sepulchre," she said. "It stands on a spot previously occupied by a Temple to Aphrodite, erected by the Roman Emperor Hadrian. This underground room, forgotten and hence preserved, is all that remains of the original temple."

He thought about the guided tour he had taken through the church above, in which was located Golgatha, the place of Jesus' crucifixion, as well as Jesus' tomb. A guide with candy on his breath had showed him a hole in the rock that, the guide said, marked the exact spot where Jesus' cross had stood. He had declined the guide's suggestion he insert his hand into the hole. He had, however, touched the headstone of Jesus' tomb for a special blessing after a priest had thrust a small cross and a flower into his palm. He had gotten the message: if you don't want to donate, don't visit our church. The guide had then shown him the key to the church's main door. The key was left in the hands of a neutral Moslem family to avoid jealousy among the Christian factions--Armenian, Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Coptic, Syrian, and Abyssinian--who shared property rights to the enclosed holy spots.

He felt a tightness in his chest as he gazed on the statue of Aphrodite, then looked at the opposite wall which was clearly of recent construction.

"Come," she said, "and I will show you the newly restored functional area of the Temple." She turned a

key in what appeared to be a door of solid copper, and they stepped into a warm, incense-filled room, which was dimly illuminated by colored lights reflecting off the walls and casting their hues onto the patches of steam floating in the air. The ceiling was formed of pieces of mirrored glass fitted at varying angles to generate an undulatory kaleidoscope. He did not recognize the language of the choir, but the music had a haunting, sensuous quality.

She bade him relax on a small pile of cushions. "The attendants will tell you what to do." He watched her leave through another door, then looked about him carefully. He monitored his internal senses, but felt in no danger. Even the tension that had dogged him constantly from his arrival at Ben- Gurion Airport was gone. He noticed a decorated Greek vase on a small table. He got up to look more closely, and saw it was a picture of a naked hetaira, standing, but leaning forward with head down. A man was entering her from behind.

Curtains parted and a young girl clad only in a short terry- cloth robe stepped inside carrying a goblet on a silver platter. He suddenly felt overdressed in the heat of the room. She kneeled beside him, holding out the platter. He took the goblet and lifted it to his lips. It was warm red wine, surprisingly good. She smiled encouragingly at his small sips, so he quaffed the remainder and returned the goblet to the tray.

In a moment the attendant had returned with the cup refilled, and with another girl. This time the tray was set by his side, and the two girls began to help him out of his clothes. They wrapped a large towel around his body, then left him to finish the wine. The dim light had taken on a bright crystalline pattern and the smell of incense had become strongly erotic. He realized the wine contained a psychedelic.

The liquid spread soothingly throughout his body, and he settled deeper into the cushions. He recalled William Blake's reference to the soul's five windows, and noted his own had grown larger, sucking in a rich

bouillabaisse of light, sound, taste, touch, and smell.

After an indeterminate interval the two girls returned and led him into an adjacent room with a large sunken bath. When he was fully immersed, they disrobed and joined him on either side. They rubbed his body with soap. He leaned back against the sloped back of the bath, enjoying the exquisite touch of their fingers on his muscles. He was some ancient creature, floating on the ocean surface, the sun warming his skin. Then an electric shock went through him when the hands began to lather his genitals, temporarily jolting him back into the exterior world.

One of the nymphs smiled at his swelling member, and he looked at the curve of her brow, the delicate neck, and the brown nipples on the small breasts. She looked something like Theresa, that day hiking along the crest of the hills, when she had leaned back against a large rock, laughing, taunting him to take her in the bright sunlight. So that's what he had done, slipping off her panties, and lifting her dress to press against her, later turning his head to the side to look out over the Mediterranean as he came.

Now the video is rolling as they rinse off the soap, and begin to methodically cover him with a clear perfumed liquid. He sees the pavement rushing toward him as the car weaves through the Judean hills on the road to Beersheba. At the West Bank checkpoint the soldiers look at the plates on the car and wave him on through. He passes by rocky hills, seeing occasional roadside produce stands and young boys on donkeys herding goats and sheep, till he turns off at Hebron, the burial place of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, where David is anointed king and lives for a time with his six wives, but he is not here to see the monuments.

Then they lead him through an entrance surrounded with myrtle branches into a third room with a floor covered with thick rugs and bid him kneel on a small cushion. He realizes he is in the principal room of the temple--it feels vaguely familiar--the floor around him

strewn with rose petals. He sits back on his heels with his hands on his knees. The room is dark save for a muted light that silhouettes a statue of Aphrodite. This one is life-size, larger than the one he sees on the split-screen of previous time, the light going out for a moment, then reappearing. He can see a faint aura around the statue of the Goddess, and he shifts his head to see it better from the sides of his eyes, then feels the surge of adrenaline as the statue moves.

The room becomes somewhat lighter as the Goddess approaches, and he can see her skin glistening with a light coating of oil. He runs his eyes over her torso, the breasts full, the belly perfectly formed. He drops his gaze to the thighs topped with a triangle that seems to sparkle with gold. She is stopped a few inches away, smiling down at him. He stares at her pubis, feeling the heat from her body, smelling her sex. Lines echo in his consciousness. His own words? Someone close to him?

Stab your demoniac
Smile to my brain!
Soak me in cognac,
Cunt and cocaine.

He is on fire. In other circumstances he might feel ridiculous, kneeling like this, a projection from his own body pointed in the air, now seemly too expansive, like a terracotta lamp of Priapus with its extended, exaggerated phallus, the end set aflame and hung in a doorway telling evil spirits to fuck off. But he is here to worship and by Goddess that's what he intends to do. As she speaks to him with words he does not understand, and the voice of the choir rises, he reaches out grasping her hips, pulling her forward, and runs his tongue over and into the golden hair. She places her hands on his head, and then sits and lays back as he works his way upward to her lips. Her lips melt away like a soft marshmallow sauce, then return firmer and she is biting his lower lip. Now he has fused with this Goddess, and as she wraps her legs around him he realizes he is no longer certain of the boundaries of his own body.

Slipping down the side of the mountain into deeper and deeper snow, this winter's crazy stunt. The snow is suddenly up to his chest, then a whoosh as it collapses beneath him. He is holding himself wedged against the icy walls of the crevice looking down, straining, ripping off a glove with his teeth and clawing at the rock, trying to pull himself up and out, his feet kicking uselessly below. The agony of working upward a half-inch at a time, a shouted primal defiance of gravity pulling him down. Then the sudden knowledge that slowly, slowly, he will make it, finally rolling out to the side, and being flooded with the terror there is no feeling in his hand. He plunges it inside his clothing against his chest until finally the first searing needles spread through his fingers.

The tension still builds. He is at the exam, his Senior year, having worked all night with only an hour's sleep. He notes with satisfaction the logical working of his mind, producing the answers in lock-step fashion. Until he looks at the clock and realizes he is actually in slow motion, working at a rate that will allow him to finish half the questions at best. Everything is there--the insights, the recall of facts, the intuitive sense of the expected answer. No mental blocks, no panic at unfamiliar material, just the overwhelming fear that he is going to fail because his mind is working too slowly. Straining at his brain, a special kind of mental pressure that he exerts in dreams when he is flying, holding himself aloft and moving forward as though propelled down an inclined plane, but keeping a uniform distance above the earth. Making his mind work faster, his hand write faster, looking at the clock, feeling a dull fire running up and down his back, until out of the blue on the last question--there isn't the slightest tumescence in his penis-- he is suddenly convulsed in orgasm. He sits there in surprise, then looks guiltily at the surrounding students still immersed in their exams, and wonders how he is going to hide the stain on his trousers as he leaves the room.

In the Pacific off Malibu he feels the motion toward the

shore. He has never spent enough time at this to be any good at it, but now miraculously, with no need to paddle, the board is moving forward, upward, following the swell of the building wave. He is standing as the foamy wave crests--a wave you never get in Malibu--and looking at the watery canyon below, his feet like magnets drawing the board into him till it becomes a living extension of his body. Now he begins the downward slice through the liquid, the sole of his board adjusting to subtle shifts in pressure, and he accelerates, riding the foam. The exquisite pleasure surges throughout the neural network, delivering a lusty joy to the outposts of his body, and he realizes all his life he has been waiting for this one moment, this one supreme second when he is completely attuned to the rhythms of life and the forward motion of the universe. Then, as he rides the wave, the spray rising up around him, he feels the special tightness in his chest, a tension like he is physically contracting his pectorals, but not that. His armpits are like hooks grasping at the air flowing around him. Then he catches the flow and rises off the board. He is flying, surfing the air, exactly like the dreams, except now he is fully awake.

He looks down at the curiously entwined bodies, which disappear as he rises through the thick clouds and out into the starry blackness. He cruises the edge of space, the planet above and below him absorbed in its own retrograde motion. And he knows now this is what it is all about.

Here in the open frontier he is free at last.

(to be continued)

The Magician is the author of other episodes of the Jack Parsons story (<http://zolatimes.com/jparart/Aparmenu.html>).

from *The Laissez Faire City Times*, Vol 2, No 12,
April 20, 1998

Jack Parsons &

The Curious Origins of the American Space Program

by The Magician

Part 7: Sex and the Single Succubus

I had made it to the office around eleven o'clock in the morning, and we had worked steadily since then. Sheri's expert on Scientology turned out to be Trisha, and Sheri had filled in some gaps with her over the phone. Sheri summarized:

"Here roughly is the chronology so far. Jack Parsons shows up at Cal Tech in 1936, age 21, wanting to build space rockets. The GALCIT project is initiated. At this time L. Ron Hubbard, age 26, is off somewhere writing men's action-adventure stories, pulp westerns, and so on. Hubbard doesn't write his first science-fiction story until 1938, about the time that Hap Arnold of the Army Air Corps appears at the GALCIT laboratory in Pasadena wanting to know if rocket research could help him with the problem of air strips which were too short for takeoff of modern military planes.

"Parsons supposedly learns about Aleister Crowley while taking a couple of night classes at USC. He and his wife Helen join the Los Angeles branch of Crowley's O.T.O. in 1939. While pursuing magic, Parsons is also working with Theodore von Karman, Frank Malina, and Ed Forman at Cal Tech, and he and Forman are working for the Halifax Powder Company in the Mojave Desert.

"The Army Air Corps takes over sponsorship of the GALCIT project in 1940, and Parsons spends most of his time developing jet- assisted takeoff units.

"Meanwhile L. Ron Hubbard also goes to war. What happens there is all part of Hubbard's Navy record, which gets released to a Scientologist named Gerry Armstrong under the Freedom of Information Act in 1981. Hubbard gets into the U.S. Naval Reserve in

July 1941, as a Lieutenant, using various letters of recommendation out of which he has fabricated an apparently bogus past. In the Naval Reserve he first writes public relations articles, and then takes Intelligence Officer training in New York. He gets bumped out of Intelligence after his first assignment, because he is considered unreliable. He is always trying to draw attention to himself and impress others with his importance, and turns in reports which read like, and may have been, pulp fiction. Eventually he goes to anti-submarine warfare school in Miami, and gets appointed Commanding Officer of a submarine tracker, the USS PC-815, but has his career sidetracked again when he spends several days dropping depth charges on what the Navy concludes is a magnetic soil deposit. Hubbard also shells a Mexican island (target practice, he says), and Mexico lodges an official protest.

"Back in Pasadena, Parsons leaves his position as head of solid-fuel rocket research at the Army Air Core Jet Propulsion Research Project in 1942, and devotes his full time to similar work at Aerojet, the new company he helped found. His friend Ed Forman does the same. Parsons is experimenting with drugs at this time, as illustrated by a poem he published in 1943 in the OTO's Oriflamme:

I hight Don Quixote, I live on peyote,
marijuana, morphine and cocaine,
I never know sadness but only a madness
that burns at the heart and the brain.
I see each charwoman, ecstatic, inhuman,
angelic, demonic, divine.
Each wagon a dragon, each beer mug a flagon
that brims with ambrosial wine.

"He is also building up the Agape Lodge. His technique may have been similar to that of his mentor Wilfred Smith. The latter's technique was described by another member of the lodge, Louis T. Culling, in his book *A Manual of Sex Magick*. Culling refers to Smith under the name 'Frater 132'. When Smith started the Los Angeles O.T.O., there were only eight members. He would invite visitors to observe the performance of something called the Gnostic Mass, during which he would have sex with as many different women visitors as possible. During sex, he would concentrate on the idea that he was transmitting into them a psychic force of attraction to the O.T.O. His paramour did the same with the men visitors. As a consequence, within one year the lodge membership had grown to eighty-five.

"Parsons takes over as head of the California O.T.O. in 1944, after Crowley expels Wilfred Smith for turning the lodge into a love cult. Living with Parsons at this time is 'Betty', or Sarah Elizabeth Northrup, who later marries L. Ron Hubbard. She is an beautiful, blond eighteen- year-old USC coed when she moves in with Parsons, after her sister, Parsons' wife Helen, leaves with Wilfred Smith. Parsons encourages Betty not to be monogamous in her relationships, saying that jealousy is a base emotion.

"Now about that mansion. Parsons owns the place at 1003 S. Orange Grove, as well as the adjoining carriage house where his laboratory is when he dies. He inherits the property from his father. He subdivides the mansion into apartments, keeping the two largest rooms for himself. These also serve as the Agape Lodge for O.T.O. meetings. He puts an ad in the paper that only 'Bohemians' need apply to rent his apartments, so he had basically artists, actors, and people like that staying there.

"By war's end in 1945, Parsons and Forman have sold out all of their Aerojet stock to General Tire, though Malina and von Karman still own half their shares. Meanwhile, L. Ron Hubbard ends up the war in a naval hospital in Oakland, Calif. He has an ulcer. He devotes his time trying to convince the V.A. he should be given a full disability pension, claiming various ailments, war wounds, and so on. By this time, Parsons is possibly familiar with Hubbard's name, because sometimes the people at his place sit around discussing the latest science fiction stories, criticising ideas and techniques.

"A science fiction illustrator named Lou Goldstone introduces Hubbard to Parsons. Goldstone often visits at Parsons place, and one day he brings Hubbard with him. According to a letter Parsons wrote Crowley in July 1945, he had met Hubbard about three months previously, and Hubbard had been living with him in the house at 1003 S. Orange Grove for a couple of months.

"Parsons and Hubbard first hit it off really well. Eventually they have a falling out over a business with some boats. Trisha says that Hubbard and boats always spelled trouble. She says that when Hubbard wrote his first hardback in 1937 (a book entitled *Buckskin Brigades*) he got a check for \$2,500 and rushed out and bought a small boat, the *Magician*, despite a pile of unpaid bills.

"Anyway Parsons, Betty, and Hubbard start a company called Allied Enterprises. They sign the papers in January 1946. The purpose is to buy boats on the East Coast and sell them on the West. Parsons puts up nearly all the money, about \$21,000. Hubbard kicks in \$1,200, while Betty free rides.

"In the meantime there is heavy tension between Parsons and Hubbard. Although Parsons and Betty have had other bed mates in the past, Parsons has a strong streak of jealousy when Betty devotes herself exclusively to Hubbard. So Parsons sets about seeking another partner. He wants more than just another girl friend. He wants a 'scarlet woman', a magical partner with whom he can beget a 'Moonchild.' The Moonchild will be the incarnation of a God, and Parsons has in mind one prophesied in *The Book of the Law*. His scarlet woman shows up in the form of the artist Marjorie Cameron.

"Meanwhile Hubbard and Betty head off to the East Coast with \$10,000 of Allied Enterprise money to purchase the first boat. Hubbard calls from Miami and says they've bought a yacht called the *Diane*. Then Parsons doesn't hear anymore from them, and after a while gets alarmed. He goes to Miami to discover that Allied also owns two schooners, *The Blue Water II* and the *Harpoon*. Parsons can't find the lovebirds, so has someone watch the schooners, and one day gets a report that the Harpoon is pulling out of the harbour. This is when he does a ritual to the spirit of Mars and a squall drives Betty and Hubbard back to shore.

"Parsons files suit in Dade County court and gets back two of the boats, and part of the third, and dissolves Allied Enterprises. He goes back to Pasadena. This is July 1946. The love birds Betty Northrup and Ron Hubbard sell their share of the third boat and get married on the East Coast. This is while Hubbard is still married to his first wife."

"What does Parsons do with his boats?" I asked.

"No information." Sheri continued: "Hubbard goes off and writes *Dianetics: The Modern Science of Mental Health*, which is first serialized in *Astounding Science Fiction* in 1950."

"What is the relation between Hubbard and Parsons during this time?"

"Apparently they had no contact. Hubbard spends a good bit of time in

Laguna Beach, and in Los Angeles after the publication of *Dianetics*. But there is no indication they saw each other again, after Allied was dissolved in July 1946."

"Do we know where Hubbard was when Parsons died, in June 1952?"

"Hubbard seems to have been in Phoenix, delivering lectures on Scientology to the Hubbard Association of Scientologists. By this time Dianetics had already been superseded by Scientology."

I felt again the twinge of disappointment. We had been over this before and it had negated one working hypothesis. I had toyed with a title for the report to Trans-Global: "Scientist Slain by Scientologist." But I should have known the job wouldn't be that easy.

So much for Hubbard. I would have to look for another villain.

"What year was it Parsons wrote the poem?"

"1943." She recited it again.

Parsons was ahead of his time. I thought about the date. The timing was coincidental, of course, but 1943 had been a pivotal year in the history of psychedelic drugs: Albert Hoffman had discovered LSD; the OSS had started experiments with marijuana; and the SS had tested the effects of mescaline.

At Sandoz in Basel, Switzerland, Hoffman had been examining derivatives of ergot, the rye fungus. He had apparently absorbed some d- lysergic acid diethylamide through his skin while changing a filter paper. He became not unpleasantly drunk and found his mind displaying a series of vivid images. To test the theory LSD had caused the experience, he deliberately took 250 micrograms--which he thought a very conservative dose--and embarked on a three-day trip.

The Office of Strategic Services, meanwhile, had been looking for a truth drug that would make people talk. In early 1943 it had decided the most promising among the ones tested was *cannabis indica*, and began trying it out on personnel from the Manhattan Project. The Project, the wartime effort to construct an atomic bomb, had a high level of security. Concentrated oral doses of marijuana made the subjects throw up, but when smoked in a mixture with tobacco made

them mellow and loquacious. The first field test took place on May 27, 1943, when an OSS agent supplied marijuana-injected cigarettes to the New York gangster August Del Gracio. The OSS had been talking to Del Gracio about Mafia cooperation in keeping the waterfront free of enemy agents, as well as help in preparing the Allied invasion of Sicily. The test was a success: Del Gracio babbled on and on, revealing secret details of the drug trade.

The Schutzstaffel doctors at the Dachau concentration camp were more interested in control than confession. The SS was looking for a drug to turn unruly people into spineless zombies. Mescaline didn't do the trick, even though it made some people reveal their innermost secrets: the covert hostility of the inmates simply became overt.

Later in the 1950s the CIA, the OSS successor agency, had also searched for drugs useful in agent control, and had funded through foundation grants the bulk of LSD research. With the cooperation of Eli Lilly and Sandoz, the two LSD manufacturers, the CIA monitored or controlled worldwide LSD distribution for the rest of the decade. As part of the testing, interestingly enough, the early researchers in the CIA's MKULTRA project agreed among themselves that a co-worker could slip them LSD at any time. It made for hazardous duty. One co-worker was slipped LSD at the morning coffee break, and fled fearfully out of his office and across the nearby Washington Mall. He crossed the Potomac into Virginia, and hid under a fountain to escape monster cars.

I rubbed my eyes and looked at Sheri. There was still the issue of Crowley's or Parsons' (or Homer Nilmot's) connections to intelligence agencies. Here the record was murky and our best information was only moderately reliable.

Theodor Reuss, the world-wide head of the O.T.O. who gave Crowley a commission in 1912, was apparently an agent for the German Secret Service as well as a journalist. With Crowley himself the record was more ambiguous.

Crowley was turned down for an job in British Intelligence at the beginning of World War I because he was too controversial (although Crowley claimed it was because he wasn't sufficiently stupid). Crowley subsequently wrote for the German-American poet and publisher George Sylvester Viereck. Viereck thought the American

press one-sidedly British, and took it upon himself to rectify the balance. He published *The Fatherland*, a weekly which expounded Germany's view of the European war, and *The International*, a literary journal that he also gave a pro-German orientation. His efforts were generally approved by the rest of the media up until the U.S. entered the war against Germany in 1917. Typical afterward was the view expressed by one previously-sympathetic editor, who called Viereck "a venom-bloated toad of treason."

Crowley began to contribute articles to both periodicals in 1915 after a trip to New York. Whether or not Crowley's primary intent was to act as an agent provocateur, as he claimed, and to undermine German propaganda by carrying it to excess, his devotion to the cause was clearly tongue in cheek. Privately he expressed the opinion Viereck would do anything for money. Crowley's cynical view of the war ("we have waited a long time to smash Germany and steal her goods") and opposition to British Imperialism impressed Viereck, however, and in 1917 Crowley became the de facto editor of *The International*. Crowley seized the opportunity to get into print a lot of his unpublished stories, poems, and essays, including a series about a detective named Simon Iff.

Crowley's pro-German and pro-Irish writings caused consternation in Britain, but not in America because, according to Richard Deacon in *A History of British Secret Service*, Crowley was supplying information to American Intelligence. But, if Deacon was correct, to whom and about whom was Crowley reporting? In 1915 President Wilson had instructed the U.S. Secret Service to set up a unit to spy on suspected German agents. The unit had stolen documents relating to Viereck's activities and had leaked them to the *New York World*. If Crowley gave information to the Secret Service regarding Viereck or anyone else, the fact was not shared with the FBI, for later, in 1942, J. Edgar Hoover used Crowley's previous association with Viereck as a basis for denying him entry into the U.S. Crowley himself seemed to imply he supplied information to someone concerning Theodor Reuss, the "Outer Head of the Order," an O.T.O. position Crowley later assumed himself in 1922.

In the 1930s Crowley roomed in Berlin with Gerald Hamilton, a German spy. Deacon indicates that, being friends, they concocted reports on each other: Crowley's reports on Hamilton going to MI5, while Hamilton's reports on Crowley went to German Intelligence.

Sheri had shown me a picture in *The Book of the SubGenius* in which two individuals, one from the political left and one from the political right, are snarling and fuming at each other, while J. R. "Bob" Dobbs surreptitiously picks both their pockets. You could imagine Crowley and Hamilton doing something similar: milking the system for their own purposes.

As World War II approached, both the Germans and the British became suspicious of occult organizations. Heinrich Himmler, head of the Nazi SS, thought the Rosicrucians were a cover for the British Secret Service, though it was in fact through independent astrologers that British Intelligence scored one of their greatest coups. The Third Reich's Deputy Fuhrer, Rudolph Hess, relied heavily on the advice of astrologers, and in 1941 a plan conceived by Ian Fleming of Naval Intelligence was executed using faked astrological forecasts to lure Hess to Scotland, where Hess expected to negotiate with a pro-German political circle. Hess was captured, but the British subsequently failed to exploit the event for propaganda effect, because British higher-ups feared there really was a pro-German clique within their own government.

Then there was Crowley's relationship to Maxwell Knight, the MI5 officer who alleged served as model for Ian Fleming's "M" in Fleming's James Bond stories. Knight was introduced to Crowley by the occult writer Dennis Wheatley. In a biography of Knight entitled *The Man Who Was M*, Knight's nephew is quoted as saying his uncle told him that Knight and Wheatley went to Crowley's occult ceremonies out of academic interest in black magic. Wheatley was doing research for his books, so Knight and Wheatley, the nephew said, "applied to Crowley as novices and he accepted them as pupils." The biography indicated that both Wheatley and Knight had apparently found Crowley disappointingly normal in one respect: he was well-dressed and had the voice and manner of an Oxbridge don.

* * *

"The Phallus is the physiological basis of the Oversoul," wrote Aleister Crowley. From my conversation with Homer Nilmot, I gathered that Lyndon Johnson would have agreed. The President thought he had the Vice-President's Oversoul in his pocket.

I decided to stop by Dirty Frank's on the way home. I was thinking

about A.C., since I was assuming at this point that Jack Parsons' beliefs were the same as Crowley's, once updated a generation and translated to California. (A big transition, to be sure.)

Aleister Crowley's magic was based on that of John Dee, the Elizabethan mage. Crowley even thought of himself as a reincarnation of Edward Kelley, the sometime rogue who served as Dee's scribe. That is, it was Kelley who received the channelled revelations which Dee recorded, just as it was another Kelley-- Rose Kelley, Crowley's wife and the sister of a future President of the Royal Academy--whom the alleged being Aiwass used as a medium to prepare Crowley to receive *The Book of the Law* in Cairo in 1904.

What Dee called angels, Crowley called preterhuman intelligences. These intelligences resided in other dimensions, and humans could interact with them to human benefit. Anyone could do it, Crowley indicated. But of special importance were those whom Crowley termed "The Secret Chiefs," a group of superhumans who were in constant contact with certain of these intelligences, and who were concerned with the spiritual progress of mankind.

I was sitting at the bar having a draft when my thoughts were interrupted.

"Yo, brother."

A bearded man of medium height and build was grinning at me. He was sitting at a booth with a companion who had one forearm wrapped in a bandage.

I looked at him inquiringly.

"You got to separate the chaff and the wheat," he cackled.

The extended campaign of mind-fucking was beginning to annoy me. I looked at these two characters. They didn't look like members of a vast conspiracy, but you never could tell.

I finished my beer and left.

Much of Crowley's magic was devoted to establishing communication with various nonhuman beings. He found sexual magic more

efficacious than other methods he had tried, and after 1914 most of his rituals involved Bacchus, Aphrodite, and Apollo. Bacchus was invoked by wine or by what Crowley called the "elixir introduced by me to Europe": fruit juices mixed with an extract of peyote. Ether, strychnine, and cocaine could also be used, the latter with "prudence." Apollo was invoked by the tom-tom, the violin, or the organ. Aphrodite was invoked by auto-, hetero-, or homosexual acts.

Crowley seemed to think that sex was an independent force. He would have disagreed with William Sargant, who had implied that such rituals work only by changing the consciousness of the participants. But theory was less important than the fact the rituals produced observable results. Sex magic was described by Crowley in *Of the Nature of the Gods*, *Of the Secret Marriages of the Gods with Men*, and *Liber Agape*.

The *opus*, or Work, of sexual magic, was explained using the traditional terminology of alchemy. In an act of magic, the erect "wand" of the magician might be introduced into the "privy chapel" of the woman. While the magician concentrated on the goal of the Work, the couple would then spend at least an hour at the altar, exulting in love, before performing the "Sacrifice of the Mass," or coming to orgasm.

The "Gluten of the White Eagle," or female sexual secretions, mingled with the "Elixir of the Red Lion," or male sexual secretions. The mixture was allowed to undergo a transmutation in its natural alchemical furnace for a few minutes. It was then consumed in its entirety by the magician.

It couldn't be any worse than eating yogurt, I suppose.

Spirits were contacted using the talismans and invocations of John Dee's Keys of Enoch. The magician would recite the invocation of a particular Key, and then masturbate over the talisman while concentrating on the ruling spirit of that Key.

The creation of a Moonchild was covered in Crowley's novel of the same name. The operation was an attempt to get a nonhuman spirit, such as a planetary spirit or a God, to incarnate into a human body. Jack Parsons had endeavored to produce a Moonchild with Marjorie Cameron, and had undoubtedly followed Crowley's instructions

carefully. The key factors seemed to be that the prospective parents have appropriate horoscopes and copulate continuously in a ceremonial manner toward the desired goal. After impregnation took place, the woman was to immerse herself and her thoughts in an environment consistent with the Work: "Let the mind of the woman be strengthened to resist all impression, except of the spirit desired. Let the incense of this spirit be burnt continually; let his colours, and his only, be displayed; and let his shapes, and his only, appear so far as may be in all things." In addition, the spirit was to be invoked through daily rituals in the magician's temple.

Crowley believed any developing fetus began as just a lump of protoplasm. Only after three months or more would it attract a soul for which it would form a suitable vehicle. It was at this point of incarnation that the couple would, if the Work of Magick was successful, bar the gate against any human ego and bring about the incarnation of some non-human being.

Thus was the Moonchild begotten.

(to be continued)

The Magician is the author of other episodes of the Jack Parsons story (<http://zolatimes.com/jparart/Aparmenu.html>).

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Jack Parsons &

The Curious Origins of the American Space Program

by The Magician

Part 8: Conservation of Momentum

I took a cab to the airport. The driver was a mass of jelly, rolling from side to side in his seat as we turned corners. He breathed heavily and kept the CB turned up, chuckling at the dispatcher's comments.

In the air I tried to get comfortable in the confined seats. After the exhilaration of takeoff, flying is as much fun as sitting inside a circus cage.

I slept for a while, then woke when they brought through the breakfast service. I inspected the eggs and regretted I wasn't in First Class.

I read the paper for a while. A member of the Gorilla Anti-Defamation League had written a letter to the editor, decrying the "media transformation of peaceful, docile herbivores into stereotypically vicious, aggressive King Kongs."

There was a story about an ex-magician named Awesome Amos who went around debunking the results of scientific experiments. Recently an experimental physicist had claimed to have captured on film the passage of a magnetic monopole. This was a hypothetical particle which had only a single polarity--a magnet with just a south or a north pole.

The Awesome Amos said the alleged photograph of a magnetic monopole was faked. The reason was

obvious: magnetic monopoles didn't exist. The Awesome Amos could produce an equivalent photograph with one hand tied behind his back, he said. The monopole "trace" had appeared on a photographic negative deep inside a cave. "Put me in a cave," said Amos, "and I'll get you a full-color photo of a *Penthouse* model."

The temperature was 84 degrees coming into L.A. shortly before 11 a.m. L.A. was my old stomping ground, and it felt good to be home. I went by the Hertz counter, then took the Hertz bus to the lot on Airport Boulevard. I drove the T-Bird down to Manchester, then took the 405 freeway to the Wilshire exit and Westwood.

I went into the Old World Westwood and had a Belgian waffle for breakfast. Some Swedish businessmen at the next table were getting briefed by a native. I think he said Nicky Blair's and Spago were trendy spots. And when the weather gets rainy, he feels it in his elbow and wrist.

Heading back to the car, I walked by a store called Alexandria II, and went in and bought a book by Paul Williams about Philip K. Dick. The SF writer intrigued me because he thought he had communicated with extraterrestrial intelligence, and had written a couple of novels based on the experience: *Valis* and *Radio Free Albemuth*. I got the car out of the parking lot and caught the Santa Monica and Pasadena freeways east.

I took the South Orange Grove exit in Pasadena. I drove slowly, looking for the 1071 address where Parsons had died. It was on the west side of South Orange Grove, between Arlington and Madeline Drive. Whatever used to be there wasn't any longer, 1071 to 1079 being an apartment complex called The Georgian.

I parked the car and walked down Madeline, which was lined with large palms. I crossed Grand, and then I could see the Arroyo Seco through an opening in the

trees. Some houses sat on the incline into the Arroyo. They were buried behind cactuses and tropical plants, with rooftops level with the street. I turned right on Arroyo Boulevard, which skirted the edge of the gully. Eventually I passed a small wall lined with stones. Below, through the trees rising up from the bottom, I could see a horse path, and beyond that the Arroyo's far side: a sharp wall of vertical sand capped by trees and brush.

Just before I reached the old San Rafael bridge, I found a trail formed partially from a buried set of stone steps which wound its way through overhanging brush to the bottom of the Arroyo. A couple of miles further up would be Devil's Gate Dam, where the GALCIT group--the Suicide Club--had done their early rocket tests. The birth place of both American and Chinese missiles.

I walked along the Arroyo's sandy bed under the bridge. Among the graffiti at the base of the bridge was a large drawing of an eagle whose wings overarched the legend

DEUTCH LAND

spelled just like that. Along with a couple of swastikas.

A man and a woman rode by on horseback, and saw me looking at the drawing. "That's pre-Columbian artwork," the woman commented in passing.

I realized she was partially correct, although the skinhead artist probably hadn't had that in mind. I recalled once when I had purchased Rudyard Kipling's book *Under the Deodars* in a used bookstore, I had been startled to find an encircled swastika along with Rudyard Kipling's signature on the front cover. Doubleday, Page & Company, of Garden City, New York, had thought nothing of putting out an authorized edition with an imprinted swastika in 1911. I had later seen swastikas in the British Museum on Greek silver plates from the 3rd century B.C, and on Bronze Age pottery in a museum in Vienna.

I continued to walk up the Arroyo. To walk along this part of the Arroyo was an experience in time reversal. The city disappeared. And if you ignored the concrete sluice that ran along one side of the bed, you could imagine little had changed from the days the Arroyo had supplied acorns and water to the Gabrielino Indians.

Apparently it wasn't so dry back then.

This whole area, extending from South Orange Grove, where I had been looking for Parsons' old address, down into the part of the Arroyo above the San Rafael bridge, had once formed part of Busch Gardens, one of Pasadena's biggest tourist attractions before it closed in the depression of the 1930s. Then the Bohemians had moved in. And the kids who were determined to send rockets into outer space.

I followed a path that lead out of the Arroyo to California Boulevard. I walked by a house behind which was a garage apartment. A bare-chested man was standing out front, hosing down the lawn. Back at South Orange Grove I turned right and looked for 1003, the erstwhile address of the headquarters of the California O.T.O. If it had still existed, it would have been almost at the corner with Arlington, but now the nearest adjacent numbers were 995 and 1021.

I got into the T-Bird and drove on up the street, past the Wrigley Mansion where the floats for the Rose Parade lined up in starting formation each New Year. I turned south down Green Street, and made my way to the Pasadena Hilton, parked in the garage, and carried my travel bag through the hotel to the lobby. I got a room on the 10th floor overlooking Los Robles and downtown Pasadena.

There was something eerie about being in Jack Parsons' hometown. He was starting to feel real. I felt a tinge of excitement. But, for some unknown reason, there was also a faint sinking feeling in the pit of my stomach.

* * * * *

Trisha was lying with her legs crooked over the end of the couch. She was wearing shorts and halter.

If I went for girls, I could really go for this one, Sheri was thinking.

"What you need is an inflatable body guard," Trisha said. "One of those blow-up virile young studs who look tough and scare off other mammalian aggressors."

Sheri had been accosted on the street, and she was somewhat upset.

"I should of thought of that before going to Carolina's. Anyway, I could hardly saunter down Locust dragging a rubber Rambo."

"A little misdirection helps. You succeed through symbolism. Hitmen for Ialdabaoth have been hanging around my family for generations, ever since they ran Araunah off the threshing floor."

Sheri considered this in puzzlement. "Come again?"

"Thank you, I'm sure I will. A second coming, as it were."

"Tell me what you're talking about."

"I'll tell you a story, but first a little song and dance," Trisha said, swinging her legs up and off the couch. "Why don't we get out of this heat trap?"

"If we're going out, maybe we should pick up Helen down the street."

"Yeah, we wouldn't want Morleykins overdosing on her own excremeditation. She can amuse/confuse us with more Dog Star doggerel."

"You sound as if you doubt the utility of Helen's channeling."

Sheri herself had little opinion on the matter. She thought of herself as the quintessential observer. A *collector* of observations. She viewed Helen's channeling with the same detachment that she might give an automobile turning a street corner.

"She's passing off metaphysical re-runs as the new fall season."

"You've heard her stuff before? Where?"

"Would you believe me if I told you?" Trisha's lips bore the trace of a smile. But only a trace.

"Damn it, Trisha. You're driving me crazy."

Down the block a ways, they ascended the steps and knocked at Helen Morley's door.

"It's not me that's crazy," Trisha replied. "I don't spend my days holed up in Hermes' stacks, sorting through the obituarial effluvium of twentieth-century three-brained semi-consciousness."

"I like what I'm doing. Besides, you're the one that told me about the job. If I'm crazy, it's by your contrivance."

"The invisible hormone at work. Hello, Morleykins." Helen stood in the doorway looking pretty in pink, the All-American girl.

"Greetings and salivations," Trisha continued. "Sheri and I were wondering if you would like to go out and engage in some Old Age carnality. Say we visit my old friend Bacchus."

"You want to see Helen do something carnal," Sheri said, "you should have seen her at the Mauvaises Arts

Ball."

"Right, Morleykins. The word is out that your behavior reinforces the adage that women should be obscene and not heard. One should beware of psychopomps bearing gifts."

Helen shrugged, not understanding the allusion:

"Channeling is not good or bad per se, but whether you channel good or bad spirits."

"Environmentally speaking, one woman's channel is another woman's Love Canal," Trisha replied.

"According to Xenocrates, the daemons are intermediate hierarchies of beings between man and the One. Each planetary spirit, for example, is a living being. Each person also has his own ruling daemon which always has more influence than any other daemon: the person's own Holy Guardian Angel."

"I have nothing to do with demons."

"Neither did John Dee. He was always hurt when people accused him of sorcery. After all, he was only talking to the angels. It's all a matter of semantics. On one occasion the angels suggested that Dee and his sryer Edward Kelley swap wives, which they apparently did."

"The angels neither marry nor give in marriage," Helen said. "That doesn't mean, however, they don't have sex."

"How right you are, Morleykins. Straight and narrow, yeah, tight is the path that leadeth to righteousness. The Immaculate Conception is conceptual emasculation. And here we are at the Bacchanal."

"Am I dressed for this?" Helen again. "I could go back and put on a black leather mini-skirt."

"Bacchus was never picky about clothes. When in doubt, take them off."

"Who wants to propose a toast?" asked Sheri, when the libations arrived.

"To the Age of Horus," Trisha responded. "To the Crowned and Conquering Child."

"The Age of Yuppies, you mean."

"No, first was the Age of Isis, the age of Goddess worship and matriarchy. Then came the Age of Osiris, the years of patriarchy, with the solar-phallic Gods. These Gods, like the phallus, would die and rise again: Osiris, Dionysus, Attis, Jesus, Mithra. Finally, this century saw the beginning of a third age, the Age of Horus, the warrior God successor to his parents. A time of androgyny, whimsy, and cruelty: childhood years."

"Who said this was the Age of Horus?"

"The subject of your employer's fancy: the Great White Beast himself."

"Who are you calling Beast: Hermes or Aleister Crowley?"

"To tell the Thoth, I'm not actually sure."

"Where does that name come from, 'The Beast'? Or 'Beast 666'?" Helen wanted to know.

"According to Crowley's official court testimony, the 'Beast 666' means 'sunlight.' 'You may call me Little Sunshine,' he once said."

"Not a very good name to scare Christians with: Beware the Little Sunshine Power arising in Europe!" Helen mused.

"That happens in 1992," Sheri said. "I read the prophecy in some book. 'Final barriers to commercial intercourse are removed in the European Economic

Community. Then all nations drink of the wine of Babylon's fornication! No man may buy or sell absent a gold-backed ecu!' But seriously, let's face it: can anything good come out of Europe? The only European tourists I see around here are culturally backward nitwits. Or maybe it's just that intelligent Europeans stay home cultivating their vineyards."

"Speaking of tourists, I'm going to L.A. tomorrow," Trisha said.

Sheri felt a chill. "Why are you going to L.A.?"

"I must be about my father's business," Trisha replied.

"You have a father? I thought you sprang full-grown from the head of Zeus." Sheri wasn't able to hide her sarcasm.

"No, that was sister Athena. War Goddesses don't fuck. Athena remained virginal, like Joan of Arc, and devoted her energy to killing off men. It's fitting she was cerebrally born with the help of Hephaestus's axe."

"Life would be so simple if there were only one Goddess. And, of course, her Only Begotten Daughter."

"Monotheism has got to be history's dumbest idea," Trisha said. "It was started by that crazy Egyptian, Akhenaton, who decided there was only one God, the Sun-God Aten. The virus got spread around, by Moses and Mohammed among others, and the world's been infected since with deadly strains of Egyptian, Jewish, Christian, and Moslem mono. One God, One Way, One Truth, One Country, One Flag, One Mind, One World, One Art, One Flavor, One Purpose, One Race, One Sex, One Scripture, One Party, One Music, One Relation, One Process, One Orifice, One Sense, One Geometry, One Literature, One Idea, One Channel, One Energy, One Mass, One Frequency, One Horn, One Devil, One Marriage, One Life, One Orgasm, One Savior, One Sheriff, One Virgin, One Element, One Duality, One

Origin, One Money, One Time, One Beast, One Path, One Law."

"At least we know there is more than One World," Sheri responded. "There is a multiplicity of parallel universes. In some of these, Schrodinger's Cat died for your sins."

"Sheri's going to give us a lecture on physics," Trisha commented dryly.

"The key question is, Who Killed Schrodinger's Cat? In Schrodinger's experiment a cat is enclosed in a box with a radiation detector. If random radiation arrives the detector activates a mechanism which breaks open a vial of poisonous gas, which in turn kills the cat."

"That's a rather gruesome experiment," Helen said.

"Now before you open the box, the quantum wave function contains a superposition of states. There are states in which the cat is alive, and states in which the cat is dead. The cat is both alive and dead."

"Sounds like a cat, alright."

"But when you open the box and look, it's either one way or the other. For example, you open the box and you see the cat is dead. What killed the cat? According to one interpretation, it was the act of observation that collapsed the wave function into a single eigenstate. Since in this eigenstate the cat is dead, clearly the observer killed the cat."

"Now I understand why in the old days kings slew the bearers of bad tidings," Trisha said. "If a messenger had chosen the wrong eigenstate, he had it coming to him."

"According to another view--the many world's interpretation--the act of observation splits the current universe into a multiplicity of different universes. In some of these universes the cat is dead, while in others the cat is still alive--just as indicated by the original

quantum wave function."

"That's a lot of universes. But what good does it do you if in the current universe your cat's dead."

"Well, there's always the comfort that in some other universe some other you possesses a living feline."

"What we need is Schrodinger's Rat to gnaw a tunnel between those two universes." Trisha.

"That would be convenient, but confusing. Imagine the shock you would give the other you, when she met her doppelganger petting a dead cat."

"Imagine her shock when I switched my dead cat for her living one," Trisha replied. "But, being me, she would understand."

"How do you know the other you is a `she'?" Helen wanted to know.

"Because you were a `she' before the box was opened. It might be different, however, at the moment of conception. If the universe splits at that time, the polarities might be reversed in some of the alternative worlds." Sheri.

"Seems I've heard this before. You split open Adam's side, and out steps Eve." Helen.

"You split open Eve's side, and out steps Adam. Next you have an orgy with yourself and fall into a post-coital depression." Trisha.

"According to some Gnostics, the Fall of man was the fall into the physical world, the descent into matter," Helen said.

"The Gnostics always had material hang-ups," Trisha responded. "Which proves they needed physical therapy. What is the significance of spirit and light

without matter and darkness? That's precisely what's wrong with New Agers. They don't understand that existence is the interplay between dualities. All things fornicate all the time."

"The Fall," Sheri interrupted, "was the emergence of self-consciousness: Adam and Eve *saw* their nakedness and they were ashamed. According to Julian Jaynes in *The Emergence of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind*, prior to about 1000 B.C. communications from the brain's right hemisphere were received as auditory hallucinations and were interpreted as messages from the Gods. This process ended when man became conscious in the modern sense, i.e. self-conscious."

Trisha wrinkled her nose. "That theory ignores the fact people are still getting as many messages from the Gods as they ever did, maybe more. Moreover it retains the arrogant academic metaphysical belief that man--particularly any full professor--is the highest evolved intelligence in the universe, and hence must have created the Gods."

"Maybe that's what the Apocalypse is all about: an academic plot to destroy the Gods by annihilating the human race."

"Or it could be simply a further evolutionary stage of self-consciousness. We are going to enact the End of the World so we can watch it happen on the evening news."

"The End of the World is the end of consensus reality. Everyone becomes apocalyptic when their everyday assumptions are violated: the subway goes on strike; the president is discovered to be a crook; your daughter is sleeping with an alien."

"Better that she's sleeping with a migrant worker than being used for breeding purposes by humanoids from the Crab Nebula."

"There are Christians who believe in a `Secret Rapture'. Maybe that's what alleged abductions by space aliens really are: the Christian secret rapture. Only the true believers didn't know their God was interested in warm bodies for medical experiments. Promise them paradise and they'll line up in front of the labs."

"The Apocalypse could be the revenge of Gaia," Helen interjected. "Mother Earth is destroying the virus of human civilization, and will continue to do so as long as it threatens her existence."

"But suppose human civilization is the brain of Gaia. Wouldn't the brain kill the body before launching a direct attack on itself?" Sheri asked, looking at Trisha. Sheri was herself uncertain why she wanted confirmation.

Trisha thought for a minute. "It's possible. But suppose human civilization is Gaia's asshole. Then we're in for some heavy shit for sure."

With that thought, the three called for more libations.

(to be continued)

The Magician is the author of other episodes of the Jack Parsons story (<http://zolatimes.com/jparart/Aparmenu.html>).

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from *[The Laissez Faire City Times](#)*, Vol 2, No 14,
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Jack Parsons &

The Curious Origins of the American Space Program

by The Magician

Part 9: Paradise Lost

Gravity was reversed, so I had to climb head-first down the ladder and through the narrow passageway to reach the room that glowed with a weak blue light.

The warm and moist smell of the sea permeated the cavity. I could feel a pulse coming through the borders (walls?) of the room.

"What is that sound?" I asked someone.

"We're vibrating at 7.83 Hertz," the voice said. Then I was alone.

I looked around and saw a statue. For some reason it created an undefined longing. I looked closer.

Then it moved, and as my heart rose to my throat, the room went dark. In fear I reached out, feeling the wall for a light switch. Finally I found one beneath my fingers. I flipped it on. The room remained dark. I flipped it again. Nothing. Then, seized with a sudden terror, I forced open my eyes and turned on the bedside lamp.

I sat up and looked around in confusion, then slowly remembered I was in Pasadena, in a room at the Hilton. The bed coverings were damp and twisted.

The dream still had a physical presence. It felt familiar,

like something dreamed once before and since forgotten.

After a while I turned off the lamp and went back to sleep.

* * * * *

In her seat on the plane, Trisha ignored the stares of the man across the aisle. She looked at the slip of paper in her hand.

Gravity is the arch-enemy of successful rocket performance.

It had been one of her father's favorite quotations, taken from the *Journal of the American Rocket Society*, April 1940.

There are many types of freedom, she reflected. Her father had viewed them all of a piece. Freedom meant getting off the planet: escaping from the gravity well. Freedom also meant the right to live the Bohemian lifestyle he preferred. To him, separating these notions into separate spheres, disciplines, or areas of academic or social discourse was absurd.

He was right, of course. She had searched through his manuscripts for years, trying to understand. And one day she had discovered the answer. The same Great Tyrant who had driven their ancestors off the family farm, so to speak, centuries ago, was also the Being that kept mankind imprisoned and exiled on an out-of-the-way planet circling a Type G star.

Because of the Great Tyrant's theft, there had followed century after century of bloody warfare. Trisha sighed. All this over a piece of Middle Eastern real estate.

Well, her father had had his reasons for wanting a

moonchild. She had her own.

* * * * *

At the Pasadena Public Library I parked behind a car whose bumper informed me sex cures headaches and his other car was a piece of shit too.

The library had microfilms of two local newspapers published in June 1952: *The Pasadena Independent* and *The Pasadena Star-News*. I was trying to get a clearer picture of what happened the day Parsons died, looking for anything not reported in the clippings I had gotten from Homer Nilmot.

The *Independent* for June 18, 1952, cost five cents. The front page headline read:

**BLAST KILLS CHEMIST
MOTHER ENDS HER LIFE**

House Torn Apart by Explosion

There was a picture of City Patrolman L.D. Harnois inspecting the debris of the destroyed apartment at 1071 South Orange Grove. The story said Parsons had moved from that address on June 1, and he and his wife Marjorie were staying at 424 Arroyo Terrace--where his mother had a summer position as caretaker-- while preparing to leave for a trip to Mexico. Parsons had gone over to the South Orange Grove apartment to gather up some of his supplies.

In the *Los Angeles Times* article I had read previously, the chronology had jumped from the explosion to Parsons being pronounced dead an hour later at Huntington Memorial Hospital. The *Independent* filled in some chilling details.

"Parsons body was literally torn apart by the chemical blast.

"The explosion blew off his right forearm, tore a gaping hole in his jaw and shattered the other arm and both legs. He was still conscious after the blast."

Two upstairs occupants, Mrs. Alta Fosbaugh and Salvatore Ganci ran down and found Parsons pinned under two heavy washtubs and one wall. They were able to free him.

Martin Fosbaugh, Mrs. Alta Fosbaugh's son, said Parsons had been experimenting in order to produce a "super" fog effect for motion pictures.

"Several boxes of highly dangerous chemicals were found outside the building, apparently placed there by Parsons a few minutes before the blast."

Parsons could have removed the boxes from the apartment, or taken them there for storage, or anyone else could have.

When informed of her son's death, Parsons' mother became hysterical, began drinking heavily, and was given nembutal tablets. She said: "I can't stand to live without my son; I simply adored him." She said she "had a gun upstairs," and then committed suicide by taking the rest of the pills.

There were a few details about Marjorie Cameron Parsons, Jack Parsons' Scarlet Woman and then his wife. She arrived at 424 Arroyo Terrace unaware that her mother-in-law had just died.

"Stoic in the face of her double loss, she told investigators she and her husband were to leave last night on a pleasure trip to Mexico. The hallway of the two-story Arroyo Terrace mansion was crowded with their packed baggage."

By the following day the rumor mill had gone into action. The front page headline in the Thursday, June 19, *Independent* read:

LINK LOCAL BLAST VICTIM WITH WEIRD CULT RITES

There was a picture of Parsons on the front page. The caption read "John W. Parsons . . . spiritual seances?"

The story was based on ten-year old police files.

"John W. Parsons, handsome 37-year-old rocket scientist killed Tuesday in a chemical explosion, was one of the founders of a weird semi-religious cult that flourished here about 10 years ago.

"Old police reports yesterday pictured the former Caltech professor as a man who led a double existence--a down-to-earth explosive expert who dabbled in intellectual necromancy."

After engaging in some corny psychological speculation that Parsons was "trying to reconcile fundamental human urges with the inhuman, Buck Rogers type of inventions that sprang from his test tube," the article noted:

"Back in 1942 Pasadena police received a letter from San Antonio, Tex. The writer, who signed himself 'A Real Soldier,' asserted that a 'black magic' religious cult was being conducted from a house at 1003 South Orange Grove avenue."

Located at that address was, of course, the headquarters of the California Ordo Templi Orientis as well as Parsons' apartment at the time.

I wondered about the identity of the "Real Soldier." San

Antonio?

The *Independent* article stated the house had been leased to Parsons "and his wife Marjorie" on June 26, 1942. The reporter had the wrong wife, of course. Parsons was still married to Helen Northrup in 1942, and had never met Marjorie Cameron. But possibly Jack and Helen Parsons had first moved to that address in June 1942. Or had Parsons inherited the house from his father then?

After police received the anonymous letter, Parsons was interviewed by Det.-Lt. Cecil H. Burlingame. Parsons said he and others had formed a fraternity which would discuss philosophy, religion, personal freedom, and fortune telling.

Two years later police investigated a minor fire at the house and found books and pamphlets about a "mysterious `Church of Thelema."

"Police made no further attempt to probe Parsons' bizarre personal life."

That was reassuring. At least the Pasadena police had the good sense to mind their own business.

After the explosion, cartons of PETN and trinitrobenzine had been removed from Parsons' lab to Ft. MacArthur. Parsons had told a neighbor he was making fulminate of mercury commercially and the current batch would be his last.

Parsons was correct on that account.

Friday's paper reported the funeral under the headline "Hold Secret Funeral Rite for Parsons." Then on Sunday, June 22, the headline read "Police Drop Probe of Death Blast."

"The case is closed as far as we're concerned," Det.-Lt. Cecil H. Burlingame declared." He said a statement by

George W. Santmyer "isn't sufficient to warrant us reopening the case."

This was obviously referring to Santmyer's statements reported in Saturday's *Los Angeles Times*. Santmyer, who had worked with Parsons on a naval ordinance project, had suggested "someone else" had strewn explosive materials around the apartment at 1071 S. Orange Grove. The Pasadena police weren't interested in pursuing that.

I didn't find anything else in the *Independent*. This was 1952 and people were preoccupied with U.N. troops battling the Reds in South Korea, and with the upcoming presidential elections: Eisenhower and Nixon were running for the Republicans. The front page headline on June 24 announced:

TINY BOX TELLS WHO CAN LIVE OR DIE IN ATOM RAID

The accompanying article referred to the device as a chemical radiation detector, a "colorimetric dosimeter."

"Every Californian may some day wear one around his neck like an Army dog-tag, according to plans under consideration of state civil defense officials."

Strange world. These were the same people who thought Parsons belonged to a weird religious cult.

I turned my attention to the *Star-News*, and followed its version of the story, starting again with Wednesday, June 18-- the day following the explosion. The article implied that all four, not just two, of the upstairs residents had pulled Parsons from the debris after the explosion at 5:08 p.m. He had been found lying under a 2-tub laundry fixture.

After dragging Parsons free, they propped him against

one wall, where he was found by the city ambulance crew.

"Parsons methodically directed his rescuers, while being loaded into the ambulance."

I thought about that. About Parsons, his limbs shattered, his right forearm blown off, methodically directing the ambulance crew.

Parsons was born Oct. 2, 1914, and was the son of Maj. Marvel H. Parsons and Mrs. Ruth Virginia Whiteside. He had attended the University School in Pasadena.

There were a number of written notes found in the destroyed apartment.

"The notes, most bearing chemical symbols, but a few carrying philosophical and religious references, were found on the blast- shattered ground floor of the structure."

One partially torn note said: "Let me know the misery totally. And spare not and be not spared. Sacrament and Crucifixion. Oh my passion and shame--."

This was probably jottings for a poem, like the one Parsons had written for *Oriflamme*.

Others concerned industrial explosions. One read: "Texas City Disaster Report. 433 dead. 128 missing. (The explosive) cannot be detonated with rifle bullets, blasting caps, or dynamite."

The details of the other notes weren't given, but the article summarized: "There were other notations about the disastrous electric-plating firm explosion which killed 15 persons in 1947 and another at Parsons' own Aero Jet plant, in which eight died."

Thursday's *Star-News*: "Ironically, it was learned that Parsons had been a member of the coronor's jury which investigated the 1947 explosion of a Los Angeles electroplating company which killed 15 workers."

The Saturday, June 21, *Star-News* reported on Santmyer's statements. Santmyers indicated Parsons was operating a small explosives manufacturing plant in Fontana, and was exploring the possibility of a Mexican branch of his factory. But Parsons' wife Marjorie said no, they were just going to Mexico on a pleasure trip.

The report was bewildering: "Santmyers told press representatives that he specifically wanted to quash reports that Parsons was the victim of a murderer or that he practiced weird religious rites.

" `Jack was the kindest man I've ever known,'
Santmyers declared. `He hadn't an enemy in the world.'
"

At least part of the statement was plausible. Parsons' problem was he was too nice of a guy. Back in 1945, he had let L. Ron Hubbard move in with him and live off his charity, while Hubbard trifled with Parsons' girl (even if Parsons didn't believe in monogamy) and plotted to steal Parsons' money. Parsons should have shoved Hubbard down the steepest incline of the Arroyo Seco.

But the rest of Santmyer's statements were puzzling. The Pasadena police had assumed from the beginning that Parsons' death was an accident. The reports in the *Star-News*, the *Independent*, and the *Los Angeles Times* all implied accidental death also. The first public indication that there was a problem with the common interpretation was the story of Santmyer's remarks as given in the Saturday, June 21, *Los Angeles Times*--the report of a "death angel."

Even so, the police had said in the following day's *Independent* that Santmyer's remarks were not sufficient

to reopen the case: meaning the police had interpreted Santmyer as asking them to do just that. But the same day Santmyer talked to the *Los Angeles Times*, he told a *Star-News* reporter that he was trying to kill two rumors: the rumor Parsons was murdered, and the rumor Parsons engaged in "strange" religious practices.

Santmyer was protesting too much. There hadn't been any public implication that Parsons was murdered apart from the remarks of Santmyer himself. It certainly wasn't the Pasadena police who had raised that possibility. So who had? Who were Santmyer's denials addressed to? It might have been the Army Ordinance experts at Ft. MacArthur. They could have found suspicious circumstances surrounding the explosion at 1071 S. Orange Grove.

In addition, the ten-year old police reports only hinted at the truth about Parsons' "religion", which was one of the tales Santmyer was attempting to quash. Perhaps the other rumor Santmyer was trying to spike, the rumor of Parsons' murder, also had a basis in fact.

Homer Nilmot had not sent me on a wild goose chase.

Theodore von Karman had said the FBI had questioned him about Jack Parsons. Clearly other investigations had gone on than just the one by the Pasadena police.

Parsons' death had sparked a lot of unusual attention accompanied by curious denials. It had all the hallmarks of "national security." The real investigation would be conducted outside the media (and public) spotlight.

(to be continued)

The Magician is the author of other episodes of the Jack Parsons story (<http://zolatimes.com/jparart/Aparmenu.html>).

from *The Laissez Faire City Times*, Vol 2, No 13,
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Jack Parsons &

The Curious Origins of the American Space Program

by The Magician

Part 10: The Cult of Intelligence

After leaving the Pasadena Public Library, I drove to Orange Grove Blvd. and then down into the Arroyo Seco near the Colorado overpass. I circled the Rose Bowl then exited on the Arroyo's far side. I continued to Oak Grove Park and parked by the equestrian trail.

I walked down the trail, the sandy soil clinging to my Adidas running shoes. I reached the edge of Devil's Gate Dam and stood looking out over the Arroyo's bed, which was formed of a lumpy mixture of sand and small brush. I listened for the explosions, the test firings of Parsons' small rockets. I sat on a large rock, the breeze blowing in my face, and thought of the apartment on the other side of the canyon, down a couple of miles on South Orange Grove, where Parsons had lain with his limbs shattered, methodically directing his rescuers.

I drove on up Foothill through La Crescenta to the Glendale freeway, and headed south to Glendale. On Glendale Avenue I passed a sign that read "Virgils Glendale Hardware--Eggs 99 cents a dozen." I turned right on Chevy Chase and came back up Brand past the Alex Theater. There I discovered a private office whose business was supplying postal lock boxes.

The office catered to people and organizations who wished to receive mail under another name, or who wished to keep their real locations private.

Organizations like the Jack Parsons Memorial Society. I rechecked the address on the flier I had gotten from Professor David Wilson. I was at the right spot alright. Nowhere.

I suddenly felt tired. I drove back to Pasadena and the Hilton. In my room, I turned on the TV, on my usual theory that you've never visited a place unless you've sampled the same electromagnetic noise the locals experience. Then I stepped into the shower.

When I got out of the shower, a poignant image on the screen caused me to turn up the TV volume. It was an aerial view of a vast triangular plain.

"The Plain of Esdraelon," explained the voice, "the Greek name for the biblical Valley of Jezreel, which means 'God sows'. This was the most famous battlefield in ancient Israel. Here Thutmose III of Egypt fought the Canaanites. Here Gideon, who you can read about in the Old Testament Book of Judges, defeated the Midianites, as did Deborah and Barak the Canaanites. And Saul, the first king of Israel, battled here with the Philistines.

"More recently, in 1917, the British army under General Allenby faced the Turks in this same valley."

You might have thought it was a military documentary, but I recognized the voice as that of Oral Jerry Swagger, the evangelist.

The voice continued: "The principal North-South route through this plain goes through the pass of Megiddo, named after the ancient city. From Mount Megiddo, or 'Har Megiddo' in the Hebrew, we get the name Armageddon.

"The Bible tells us this valley will be the scene of the final apocalyptic battle between the Armies of Man and the Armies of God, between Christ and Antichrist. In the Book of Revelation, chapter 16, verse 16, you read, 'And he gathered them together into a place called in

the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.' Here occurs the seventh vial of the seventh trump. Here the 'Kings of the East', as it explains earlier in chapter 16, will be gathered with their armies. East of Israel are the great oriental hordes--the Chinese, probably assisted by Japanese technology, and allied with their Communist cohorts the Russians. The latter are the Gog and Magog we read about in Ezekiel 38. Verse 1 in Ezekiel 38 tells us Gog was the chief prince of Meschech. Historically, the Assyrians called the children of Meschech 'muska,' which is similar to 'Moskva,' the Russian name for Moscow. In addition, 'chief' is Hebrew 'rosh,' and Rosh is an ancient name for Russia.

"These Communist forces from the east will join together with the Beast Power, which is the union of ten European nations allied under a common political leader that the Bible calls 'the beast,' and a religious leader that the Bible calls the 'false prophet,' or the Antichrist. See Revelation, chapters 13 and 17. This European combine will be a revival of the ancient Roman Empire, and--like the ancient Roman Empire--will be under the spiritual leadership of a church called the 'great whore' in Revelation, chapter 17.

"These two great contenders for world power, armed with the latest in atomic weapons, will, under the guidance of the Antichrist and assisted by Satan and his demons, join forces against Jerusalem and the invaders from space. What invaders from space? The returning Jesus Christ and all his angelic hosts, when he returns to reign on this earth for a thousand years, a millennium of peace, happiness and prosperity. The world government of God, which will eliminate war, sickness, and crime. But first must take place the slaughter of Armageddon, where the blood will rise up to the horses' bridles. It says in Zechariah, chapter 14, verse 12, that a soldier's flesh will rot off his body, and his eyes will be eaten out of their sockets. This will happen when Jesus turns atomic and biological weapons back against the armies that use them.

"It will be a terrible, terrible time.

"But I'm not alarmed. You know why?"

Oral Jerry Swagger looked me right in the eye through the TV screen. "Why?" I asked.

"Because I'm not going to be here," he smiled.

No, I thought. You wouldn't be here, because every atom in your body will be ten feet removed from its neighbor. I turned off the TV.

Oral Jerry was obviously a pre-tribber. Like other pre-tribs, he expected all good Christians to be raptured out of harm's way before the arrival of tribulation events like nuclear war. By contrast, post-tribbers like Pat Robertson thought Christians would have to live through seven years of trial. They would be protected by God, of course, but they had to do their part too. Many of the post-tribs, fully expecting nuclear war, were stocking up on food, studying survival tactics, even forming paramilitary armies. For some of them the millennium would arrive once Christians had infiltrated and seized control of the U.S. government.

I was more familiar with the post-tribbers because they wrote financial newsletters, expounding theories of end-time economics. Post-tribs thought pre-tribs like Oral Jerry Swagger were copout wimps.

* * *

Some of the drivers were razzing him because his was the only white limo in the line of blacks parked alongside the Four Seasons.

"You sure you can handle that thing all by yourself?" one of the drivers taunted again.

Hell, he muttered, stepping inside and starting the engine. He pulled hard to the left, out of the line and across the narrow street, halting on-coming traffic. He

reversed direction in a Y, pulled forward, and then deftly reinserted the limo into the middle of the line. Backwards.

The other drivers were still cheering when OJ came out of the hotel. Oral Jerry Swagger was known as OJ to his friends and OJS to his subordinates. He looked at the backwardly parked limo in puzzlement, but didn't say anything as the driver stepped out to open the door.

Today OJ was more than a little excited. It had been Larry Meier who had called him with the invitation--a luncheon in honor of the sister cities of Philadelphia, Florence, and Tel Aviv. And it had been Meier who had given him the inside story.

To those really in the know, Meier's credentials were of the highest order. Larry Meier, it was said, had been the young Irgun member who actually planted the bomb which destroyed a wing of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem on July 22, 1946. The explosion had taken out a piece of the British military headquarters and left a hundred bodies in its wake.

OJ told the driver to head for the airport. Then he settled back in the limo, opened the bar, and helped himself to a club soda.

It was time to sweep the deck for the Third Temple, Meier had emphasized as they worked their way through the prosciutto.

OJ clicked them off in his mind. The First Temple was the ancient Temple of Solomon, destroyed in the Babylonian capture of Jerusalem more than two and a half millennia ago. The Second Temple was begun after the return of the Jews from Babylon. It had started out small with the inferior construction of Zerubbabel, but several hundred years later--just prior to the birth of Jesus--it was magnificently rebuilt by Herod. Herod's Temple was demolished by the Romans in 70 A.D. Now there would be a Third Temple, erected by a

second Solomon or a new Herod, and located on the same site on Mount Moriah.

Meier had been unusually frank. The society was fragmenting and the survival of Israel depended on a new symbol of national unity. He had talked about the high crime levels which caused overcrowding in Israeli jails. About the peace demonstrations mounted in the streets by traitors and whores. About excessively devout Orthodox types, exempt from military service, who hurled rocks at secular Jews driving cars on the Sabbath. Meier referred to the epidemic of hashish, brought home by soldiers returning from the occupation of Lebanon, and the cocaine from Iran that circulated among the society's upper crust. While the young sought escape in drugs and disco frenzy, the rest spent like there was no tomorrow.

The kibbutzim and moshavim, which had made the desert bloom through the miracle of borrowed money, were in virtual bankruptcy. The country's high standard of living and high level of military expenditures had long depended on contributions from American Jews, reparations from Germany, and military aid from the U. S. But the inflow of foreign cash seemed to be drying up.

Some of the largest industrial groups, Meier had confided, were well behind in payments to foreign banks.

The Israeli economy, set in motion by the fiery socialist David Ben-Gurion, was a mess. Ben-Gurion had saddled Israel with an inefficient government bureaucracy and the socialistic union movement, the Histadrut. Inflation was stuck at the double digit levels dictated by the government's continued resort to the printing press to finance a chronic budget deficit. There was a large black market in goods priced and traded in U.S. dollars, because no one trusted the shekel, which had been intended as a new symbol of national pride when it replaced the Israeli pound.

Then there was the population problem. Sixty percent of the Jewish population was Oriental, and the Oriental Jews, with differing cultural traditions, were growing much faster than European Jews. The government was attempting to rectify the balance by encouraging more European immigration. It had even tried to get the U.S. to refuse admission to Soviet Jewish refugees, and hence to force them to emigrate to Israel, but the U.S. didn't appear cooperative.

Finally, there were the Palestinians. In another decade they would outnumber Jews in Greater Israel, which was the combined areas of Israel, Gaza, and the West Bank. You needed a few Palestinians, Meier said. Someone had to collect the garbage and do the menial chores which Jews didn't want to do anymore. But more than that, Palestinians were a security threat. Ben-Gurion had known this from the beginning of Israel.

Despite his economic short-comings, David Ben-Gurion had been an astute political strategist. As a temporary tactical maneuver Ben-Gurion had accepted the U.N. Partition Resolution of 1947, which would have created Jewish and Palestinian states, because he had already worked out a secret agreement with Abdullah of Transjordan whereby Abdullah would annex the territory allocated to the Palestinians. Abdullah had had plans for a "Greater Syria" under the Hashemites, and Ben-Gurion had agreed to support his goals in return for Abdullah's acceptance of Ben-Gurion's. Then, during the 1948 war, Ben-Gurion had engaged in wholesale destruction of Arab towns and villages in his own allocated area, and had expelled the inhabitants from the country. But the process had not been complete, and now the more recent acquisition of the West Bank complicated matters. There would be no security in modern Israel, Meier had indicated, unless the remaining Palestinians were also expelled from Israel, Gaza, and the West Bank.

Well, OJ reflected, you couldn't say Oral Jerry hadn't done his part. OJ's support for Israel was unqualified: God had said he would bless those who blessed

Abraham's seed, and curse the rest. And anyway, OJ knew, Israel was the only real friend America had in the Middle East. So did OJ's followers, especially those privileged to take one of his sponsored scenic tours of the Holy Land. Tourism was the largest industry in Israel, and it was mostly Christians--not Jews and not Moslems-- who provided the tourist dollars. But Christian aid wasn't just a simple matter of credit cards and traveller's checks. During the tour each group member had the opportunity to hear discussions of Israeli military strategy and to receive explanations why Israel needed more American weapons. Tour members returning from the Holy Land were urged to write their congressmen and senators, and to demand American support for Israel.

The limo headed south on the 76 Expressway and OJ looked out the tinted windows at the passing scenery. It wasn't a pretty sight. An urban version of gehenna, he reflected. Greater Philadelphia was a stench in the nostrils of God. Nothing anyone would really miss when the bombs of the Beast Power began their work of urban renewal.

To Christians like himself, the planned construction of the Third Temple meant the End was near. OJ knew that Bible prophecy indicated Jesus would not return until the Jews had rebuilt the Temple and reinstated animal sacrifices. It had been foretold. God wouldn't have preordained something that wasn't his will.

And it was God's will the Temple rise again. But first there was the little matter of the ungodly Moslem structures on the site. Every picture you see of Jerusalem, Meier had reminded him, is dominated by the Dome of the Rock. It was like a tumor growing unchecked in the heart of Judaism. When pressed for details, Meier had been vague, but OJ knew Meier could see what was needed. The Dome of the Rock and the Al Aqsa Mosque would have to be razed. So be it. God had made a covenant with his chosen people. He had given them the land of Palestine. To the Jews, not the pagan Arabs who were trying to steal Jacob's

birthright. Satan's monuments must give way to the House of God.

The plans for the Temple had been drawn up, Meier had confided. Most of the stones had already been cut and stored away in hidden places. Dozens of craftsmen were at work molding the temple artifacts and weaving the priestly garments. In a few select religious schools, students were being trained to perform animal sacrifices as carefully prescribed in the book of Leviticus.

Fresh blood would once again be dashed at the base of the altar. Why not? OJ thought. Life is in the blood. And without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin. But the oblations wouldn't be just lambs and oxen. Not this time. Not when the armies of man gathered around Jerusalem like vultures around a carcass.

The Lord had long delayed his coming. But now, perhaps, the Apocalypse was truly at hand. Likewise the day of the Rapture, when true Christians would rise to meet their Lord. A time of rejoicing whose proximity would be signalled by the building of the Third Temple.

OJ comforted himself with that thought the rest of the way to the airport.

* * *

When he had founded Trans-Global Consultants, Edward M. Lodge had selected Philadelphia for his base of operations. It was centrally located, only an hour away from New York by the Amtrak Metroliner, and two-and-a-half hours from Washington, D.C. Office space was cheap, and there was privacy of a sort unobtainable in either of the other two cities, where many of the better restaurants had been bugged for years.

Trans-Global had since provided services to both private and governmental organizations, including

Lodge's former employer, the CIA. Given the leaky sieve of Congressional oversight committees, which were manned by rival political factions fighting over control of the intelligence bureaucracy, many of the latter projects took the form of private consultations to private individuals, some of whom happened to be intelligence officers. The funding also came from private sources, usually from companies who could recoup by overcharging on on-going government contracts. This arrangement gave both Trans-Global and Trans-Global's clients a good deal of flexibility.

The upsurge of fundamentalism at the beginning of the 1970s had brought a potent new force into American politics, and a decade later Trans-Global had been retained to monitor political attitudes and activities. Lodge had developed a network of informants in all the major fundamentalist and evangelical groups. Literature and media output was scanned for political content, and this was summarized and filed for reference. Careful notes were also kept on the major players, men like Oral Jerry Swagger, and their contacts and habits and personal sexual peccadillos. On occasion these files were selectively leaked to bring about a leadership change, or to exert subtle pressure on a group in a direction desired by a Trans-Global client.

For reasons known only to himself, Lodge had assigned the operation the codename PIGEON. Some thought the name derived from the ditty he occasionally recited while going over reports:

We place no reliance
On virgin or pigeon;
Our Method is Science,
The Target is Religion.

Others thought it referred to the traditional esteem *Columba livia* bestowed on public monuments.

Shortly after initiating PIGEON, Lodge had made all his employees watch the French documentary *Idi Amin*

Dada. He never explained why, but many of them had been struck with the Ugandan president's revelation he obtained instructions on government decisions through voices and dreams. Amin was a traditional tribal leader who swaggered and boasted, who ate the hearts of his enemies to acquire their courage, and who had fathered more than a hundred children upon his stable of wives. At least some of the employees saw that Amin's worldview was a vision easily manipulated.

Amin had confessed to the camera that he had been able to obtain "secret" Israeli documents containing Israel's plans for world conquest. Israel would be very upset if they knew he had them, Amin said. The Ugandan leader had then produced an old hard-bound copy of *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*, the classic work on the International Jewish Banking Conspiracy, fabricated in 1903 by the Czarist secret police from a French satire, *Dialogue aux Enfers entre Machiavel et Montesquieu*, by Maurice Joly. Amin apparently had no conception of the incongruity of Israel's "secret" documents available from a book publisher, and printed long before the founding of the state. Such a man was ripe for psychological manipulation by the right operative, like the one who had provided him with the book in question.

Although he never said so to his employees, Lodge viewed fundamentalist Christians in pretty much the same light as he viewed Amin. A dumb SOB born in, say, 1955 is positive that the selective interpretation of a compilation of writings arrived at through a complex and obscure political process, about which he knows little or nothing, is "God's Truth" just because a publisher serves it up with "Holy Bible" printed on the cover, and another dumb SOB reads it from the pulpit. The same suckers were likely to revere King James English as the language spoken by Jesus and the Apostles.

The most difficult aspect to PIGEON was finding good informers and analysts. He had tried some academic sociologist types as researchers, but they seemed to be

more interested in methodology and theories than in careful investigation, and they often placed an excessive reliance on printed literature. Lodge himself firmly believed in the OSS principle that you only put into a file what you wanted to be found later. And, for the same reason, he knew you couldn't understand a group just by analyzing its publications or reading stolen memos. Truth is not to be found in paper documents.

Ex-fundamentalists who had held influential posts were often more sensitive to the impact that personalities, organizational structure, and subtle doctrinal points could have on political orientation. But most of that lot were still crusaders of a sort, or else were so mentally fucked-up he wouldn't have hired them to sharpen pencils, much less do analysis.

Informants were a different matter. Here you couldn't be too picky: you had to take whomever you could get. But then all you needed was someone with inside information. You didn't care about his or her motivation for supplying it, just as long as the information itself was reliable.

It was a West German source, curiously, and not his man in Pasadena who had told him about Homer Nilmot. Homer was reputed to be a bright young chap who had once worked for Oral Jerry Swagger--with whom he was disillusioned-- as an analyst of other, competing fundamentalist and evangelical groups.

The recruitment of Homer--first as informer, then as employee--had been easy. Lodge had said he wanted Homer to help monitor the secular activities of American millennialists. He made the pitch--it was more than a pitch, he thought --that their apocalyptic political orientation was dangerous because it promoted military confrontation in the Middle East and was conducive to nuclear brinkmanship. Homer would have the chance to help prevent nuclear war.

Lodge knew that Homer, like other followers of the

Oral Jerry Swagger, believed he had a unique handle on the "truth". Homer's views had undoubtedly varied over time, given his disillusionment with Oral Jerry Swagger, but in his new job, as in his previous one, Homer would continue to view other groups as "false Christians" in some sense. Homer would interpret his religious background as "preparation" for his new role. And there were powerful economic incentives: Religious Analyst was one of the few occupations Homer was really trained for.

Lodge had figured Homer would find the job offer irresistible. And he had been right. The hire had been fortuitous. For it was only a few months afterward that Trans-Global received its contract on Oral Jerry Swagger. And Lodge had left to the task at hand with an enthusiasm he hadn't felt for years. Homer's help made it all the more delicious.

* * *

I had naively expected to show up at the door to the Jack Parsons Memorial Society, seek out the Society historian, and find The Answer in a leather-bound folio. Instead I had reached a dead end at a postal box.

But the key to doing research is to renew the search. Eventually the universe conspires to deliver what you're looking for. That's what happened in the case of Jack Parsons.

The day started slowly. I had breakfast in the Cafe Madagascar at the Pasadena Hilton. The huevos verdes and coffee.

Then I drove up California Blvd. to Cal Tech and parked by a sign that said 30 minutes parking at all times. I went into the Robert Andrews Millikan Memorial Library but didn't find anything helpful. Afterward I passed by the Karman Laboratory of Fluid Mechanics & Jet Propulsion on my way to the Aeronautics Library in the Guggenheim building.

In the January 1938 issue of *Astronautics: The Journal of the American Rocket Society*, I found this note:

"Latest of educational institutions to join the rocket research profession is California Institute of Technology.

"Frank J. Malina of the Daniel Guggenheim Aeronautical Laboratory of California Institute, in collaboration with Mr. Jack Parsons of the Halifax Powder Company, and others, has begun experimental rocket motor studies. Preliminary tests have already been run with motors burning gaseous oxygen and methyl alcohol on a simple proving stand equipped with a thrust-recording drum. Plans are underway for a complete testing laboratory."

An article by Jack Parsons and Ed Forman appeared in the August 1939 issue. They had used the law of the conservation of momentum to measure the thermal efficiency of various rocket fuel powders.

The scientific approach of Parsons and Forman contrasted with research being conducted elsewhere. In the April 1940 journal I read a letter from the Philatelic Club of Cuba Rocket-Postal Commission. The Postal Commission had experimentally launched a few pounds of mail for a short distance in an overgrown 4th of July rocket.

I had often suspected some of my own mail was delivered in a similar manner.

The July 1940 issue of the journal reported an interesting item from the June 26 *New York Times*:

"Pasadena, California.

"A discussion of the use of rocket motors

for propelling airplanes, set for today's session of the Institute of Aeronautical Sciences, was cancelled on recommendation of the Army. The cancellation was made without explanation."

The date was well before Pearl Harbor, but the Army had already gone into action, classifying GALCIT's war-related research. It gave you the idea they had already decided to get into the war.

I had xeroxed the article by Parsons and Forman, as well as a later one on GALCIT. The copies were laying on the table in front of me, and caught the eye of a grad student sharing the same table.

"Doing a history of JPL?" he asked casually.

"Actually I'm doing research on one of JPL's founders, a fellow named Jack Parsons," I said.

He looked me over carefully. "What do you want to know about Jack Parsons?"

"How he lived. What he did. How he died. Basic stuff like that."

"Jack Parsons was always trying to get off," the student mused.

"So I heard." Possibly he was referring to Parsons' sex magic.

He continued: "Parsons' work in rocketry lead him to correspond with Igor Sikorsky, the pioneer Russian helicopter designer. Parsons read Sikorsky's autobiography *The Story of the Winged-S* when it was published in 1938. When Igor Sikorsky was eleven he had a dream of walking along a luxurious passageway, with carpet on the floor and walnut doors on either side. A spherical electric light on the ceiling gave out a

bluish glow. Sikorsky felt a vibration under his feet, and was not surprised it differed from a train or a steamer, because he knew he was on a large flying ship in the air.

"Thirty-one years later, in 1931, his company Sikorsky Aircraft delivered the S-40 to Pan American Airways. The S-40 was a four-engine plane christened 'the American Clipper'. After it had been outfitted with interior furnishings, Sikorsky took a flight in it as a passenger with the Pan American Board of Directors and, noting the furnishings in surprise, found himself standing in the corridor of his dream. Much of Sikorsky's life had been programmed by a childhood vision of his future self flying.

"Jack Parsons had also heard from Arthur Young, who was then designing the Bell Model 47, which was awarded the world's first commercial helicopter license. Young had come to believe that he was really working on a 'psychopter', a vehicle for the winged self, for which the helicopter was only the outer form.

"Parsons was tremendously excited by the examples of Sikorsky and Young because their search, like his, was the product of a deeply-felt internal, one might say mystical, vision.

" 'We're all prisoners at the bottom of a 4000-foot gravity well,' Jack used to say. 'We'll never be free until gravity's tyranny is toppled.' "

"Gravity's tyranny?" I repeated.

"Parsons believed man's evolution to this point had been largely controlled by Ialdabaoth, the God of Genesis in Gnostic tradition, a basically earthbound presence whose intention was to hold man in slavery through ignorance. Ialdabaoth was one sense man's creator, but was also an evil tyrant who wanted his creation to obey him and believe everything he said with no questions asked. He would go into a rage at the first sign of individual initiative or independence of

thought, like the experimental process of eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge. The latter was `original sin'."

I didn't say anything. I just listened.

"Not a nice guy, Ialdabaoth. He existed on a regular diet of human- provided sacrificial blood, for example. He was pleased with Abel, the shepherd, because Abel made animal offerings out of the flocks he tended. But Cain, the farmer, was rejected because he could only offer fruits and vegetables from the field.

"Ialdabaoth's control somehow depended on man remaining a terrestrial creature. By contrast to Ialdabaoth, there was Lucifer, the light-bringer, the Serpent, or Prometheus, who wished to release mankind from the bonds of ignorance, and, by analogy, from his earthly prison. Lucifer's sin was the attempt to ascend into the heavens, so the legend of Lucifer cast down to earth symbolizes man's imprisonment in, among other things, Ialdabaoth's gravitational gridlock."

"You seem to be *awfully* well-informed about Jack Parsons," I said. I emphasized "awfully" to see what reaction it would provoke.

He grinned. "Let me introduce myself. I'm Srinivasa Muthuswamy, Secretary-Treasurer of the Jack Parsons Memorial Society. Just call me Renny."

Renny.

"What kind of people join the Jack Parsons Memorial Society, Renny?"

"Oh, we're mostly a group of space freaks, longevity researchers, nanotechnology enthusiasts, acid heads, ceremonial magicians, upwinger futurists, cyberpunks, scifi aficionados. Largely libertarians, believers in free markets and free minds, although we tolerate most anyone who has an interest in Jack

Parsons--like a few Randroid Objectivists who are still explaining the rational criteria that make Rachmaninoff a greater composer than Bach."

"Rachmaninoff *was* a greater composer than Bach," I said.

Renny nodded thoughtfully, then grinned.

"And Jack Parsons built better rockets than Isaac Newton," he replied.

"So getting outside gravity's stranglehold was all part of Parsons' search for liberation?"

"That's right," Renny said. "Parsons was always talking about a `Rocket to Amargi.' "

(to be continued)

The Magician is the author of other episodes of the Jack Parsons story (<http://zolatimes.com/jparart/Aparmenu.html>).

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Jack Parsons &

The Curious Origins of the American Space Program

by The Magician

Part 11: The Book of the Antichrist

The Oral Jerry Swagger had five homes, now, scattered across the U.S., including one on the East Coast, near Philadelphia where he had had the meeting with Larry Meier. But his house in Pasadena--it was a mansion, really--was in some sense his real home, his base. For it was in Pasadena that he had gotten his start, building a radio empire that reached listeners around the globe.

In more recent years more and more of the media budget had been devoted to television, but although the work had continued to grow, viewers had never quite trusted his image the same way listeners had trusted his voice.

OJ's home in Pasadena was his favorite, but he only opened it to special visitors. God was a planner, a builder, and He in no way scorned wealth. But OJ was wary of the slew of media stories that had once alluded to the opulence of his home's furnishings. "Gold brick-a-brack" they had written.

Illiterate reporters. Uncultured, slovenly scribblers. They seemed incapable of understanding the finer things of life.

To the Oral Jerry Swagger, culture had always connoted British royalty, and he had decorated his home with quality purchases from Harrods in London--articles he had selected himself. Yes, there was goldware at the dinner table, but that was a matter of respect. Carnal,

material people--the kings and prime ministers and educators he invited as weekend guests--only respected material possessions. And if they paid homage to a Man of God for the wrong reasons--well, it was still better to be respected than not.

It was good to get back to the West Coast. He always slept better in Pasadena. The nightmares of years past ("that thing" was the way he thought of it now) had gradually faded, and he normally felt the security of being surrounded by the familiar and precious things God had given him.

But for some reason tonight, his first day back from the East Coast, he turned and tossed, and when he would briefly awaken, he seemed to hear voices echoing in the room. Perhaps he had a touch of fever, he thought.

But later he realized he was sleeping restfully. "See, I am sleeping peacefully," he said to someone in his dream. Then, silently, to himself: "You are dreaming." Space and time slowly solidified, and in his dream he was consciously aware of that time in the early days of his organization, when the security guards had rounded up a crazed prophet who was wandering the property. Being a little unsure of themselves, they had brought him to OJ's private office. The man had focused his gaze in awe above OJ's head, and asked: "How is it possible that both an angel and a demon hover over you at the same time?"

At that time it had made OJ's hair stand on end to discover the war in heaven taking place so close to home. Even now, awake in his dream, he involuntarily glanced up over his head, and saw a cowled figure hovering. There was a blurry mist where the face should be. He opened his eyes and sat up with a start.

Was he awake, or just dreaming he was awake? OJ turned on the light. Yes, he was definitely in his own room. He started to swing back the covers, but then felt the wetness under his hand. There was a line of white

across the bed.

He sniffed his fingers. The smell was briny. He brushed the white line with a finger and sniffed again. It was ocean foam. Somewhere he thought he heard a door click.

Quickly he picked up the phone to summon the housekeeper. Was she staying tonight? He really didn't know. And it didn't matter. The line was dead.

OJ rose quickly and began to turn on all the lights. The bedroom light. The light in his adjacent study. The third floor hall light. Nothing. Gradually he worked his way through the house, turning on all the lights. There was no one there. He picked up the phone again. The line was good.

He dialed Security. "Yes, Mr. Swagger," the voice answered promptly.

"I thought I heard someone trying to break into the house."

"We'll be right there, Mr. Swagger. Do you want us to come inside?"

"No. No, just check around the outside. What time is it?"

"It's ten minutes after 4 o'clock, sir."

OJ returned to the third floor, leaving all the lights on. I need to settle down, he thought. He remembered he had unopened mail in his study. He would look through it.

And that was when he saw the book, lying there in the center of his desk. It hadn't been there earlier in the evening. *The Book of the Antichrist*. He knew the author. He could never forget the name.

Jack Parsons.

Involuntarily OJ sat down at his desk, and began to read the dimly remembered passages.

THE BOOK OF THE ANTICHRIST

The Black Pilgrimage

Now it came to pass even as BABALON told me, for after receiving her Book I fell away from Magick, and put away Her Book and all pertaining thereto. And I was stripped of my fortune, (the sum of about \$50,000) and my house, and all I possessed.

Then for a period of two years I worked in the world, recouping my fortune somewhat. But that was also taken from me, and my reputation, and my good name in my worldly work, that was in science.

And on the 31st of October, 1984, BABALON called on me again, and I began the last work, that was the work of the wand. And I worked for 17 days, until BABALON called me in a dream, and instructed me on an astral working. Then I reconstructed the temple, and began the Black Pilgrimage, as She instructed.

And I went into the sunset with Her sign and into the night past accursed and desolate places and cyclopean ruins, and so came at last to the City of Chorazin. And there a great tower of Black Basalt was raised, that was part of a castle whose further battlements ruled over the gulf of stars. And upon the tower was this sign.

And one heavily robed and veiled showed me this sign, and told me to look, and behold, I saw flash before me four past lives wherein I had failed in my object. And I beheld the life of Simon Magus, preaching the Whore Helen as the Sophia, and I saw that my failure was in Hubris, the pride of the spirit. And I saw my life as Giles de Retz, wherein I attempted to raise Jehanne d'Ark to be Queen of the Witchcraft, and failed through her stupidity, and again my pride. And I saw myself in Francis Hepburne, Earl Bothwell, manipulating Gille Duncan, that was an unworthy instrument.

And again as Count Cagliostro, failing because I failed to comprehend the nature of women in my Seraphina. And I was shown myself as a boy of 13 in this life, invoking Satan and showing cowardice when He appeared. And I was asked: "Will you fail again?" and I replied "I will not fail." (For I had given all by blood to BABALON, and it was not I that spoke.)

And thereafter I was taken within and saluted the Prince of that place, and thereafter things were done to me of which I may not write, and they told me, "It is not certain that you will survive, but if you survive you will attain your true will, and manifest the Antichrist."

And thereafter I returned and swore the Oath of the Abyss, having only the choice between madness, suicide, and that oath. But the oath in no wise ameliorated that terror, and I continued in the madness and horror of the abyss for a season. But of this no more. But having passed the

ordeal of 40 days, I took the oath of a
Magister Templi, even the Oath of
Antichrist before Frater 132, the
Unknown God.

And thus was I Antichrist loosed in the
world; and to this I am pledged, that the
work of the Beast 666 shall be fulfilled,
and the way for the coming of
BABALON be made open and I shall not
cease or rest until these things are
accomplished. And to this end I have
issued this my Manifesto.

Belarion Armituss AL
Dagjal Antichrist

Jack Parsons

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First revealed Oct. 31, 1984 e.v.

OJ stared at the final page for a long time. The date was altered, OJ knew. **1984**: the name of George Orwell's novel. Orwell had originally titled it **1948**, because the events he was writing about were occurring in his own time. But an editor thought the title too controversial, and so had inverted the last two digits. The correct date in Jack Parson's book was 1948.

Yes, OJ remembered Jack Parson's book well. It had been given to him in 1952 when he was a young man twenty-two years of age. And he remembered the other book, also: **1984**. The substitution meant someone knew. Someone knew the evil that he, OJ, had once done and forever atoned for.

"That thing" had returned to haunt him. And there, sitting at his desk, with all the lights on, surrounded by the Godly culture of Harrods, the terror swept over him like a tidal wave.

* * * * *

Dean Malik sat at one of the small round tables in the basement of Larry Blake's Bar on Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley, California, nursing a Dos Equis. The baseball game was still playing on the wide screen, which would soon be rolled up to make way for the band. He wasn't sure who was on. Perhaps Pamela Rose and Peter Walsh with The Blue Monday Party.

Zak, sitting across from him, blew smoke at the exposed pipes hanging from the ceiling. Dean could tell he was tense. But then Zak was always that way, veins filled with a natural flow of amphetamines.

"You've gone over everything?"

"I've been through it. There won't be any mistakes," Dean said.

Dean's real name was Salah ad-Din, but they had always called him Dean at school. He was the son of a former consular official. Zak was Yitzhaq Adolph Alfasi.

"I thought Jews didn't name their kids Adolph anymore," Dean had remarked, on hearing the decipherment of the middle initial.

Zak had shrugged. "I was named after my grandfather."

The explanation made partial sense to Dean. Zak's other grandfather was Yitzhaq. Not much you could do about the balance of genealogical power.

"I have to have it on tape, the documents prove nothing," Zak said.

"You'll have it." A short pause. "Provided you have the money."

The band began setting up. There was a bald man with a small pony tail. And a girl singer who looked something

like Bette Midler.

It was a dangerous game Zak was playing, Dean mused. Crossing your own people. Not that Dean cared. The Institute can go to hell, he thought, but without passion. A long time ago they had killed Dean's father at Cannes, where the family had gone for vacation. His father had been standing on a balcony below an apartment owned by an important PLO official when the Mossad had cut him in half with a Kalashnikov. The choice of weapon was apparently meant to imply a Palestinian internal dispute. But the deception was ineffective because they had assassinated the wrong man. The police were already there when Dean and his mother returned from the beach, and Dean remembered thinking irrelevantly that now they wouldn't be taking the boat over to the Iles de Lerins, to see the cell of the Man in the Iron Mask at Ste. Marguerite.

Some friends got them a room at the Hotel Carlton on the Rue du Canada, and at breakfast the next day he heard people talking, shaking their heads over the mistake, but saying when you got down to it all these Arabs looked alike.

What makes you think it was the Mossad, Zak had asked, when Dean told him the story.

The DGSE had the apartment under surveillance, Dean said, using the French initials for *La Direction Generale de la Securite Exterieur*e. They had taken a photo of a man in the hedge moments before the killing. The man had been identified as an agent of Mossad.

Zak didn't believe it. Mossad assassins killed at close range with .22 Berettas. They checked their victims carefully so no mistakes were made. They normally avoided noisy attention-attracting weapons. You looked your man in the eye, the Beretta went poof- poof, and you slipped away quietly.

Dean snorted in derision. Zak was a romantic. The

Mossad made mistakes like everyone else. Dean had also read the self-serving propaganda, he said, seen it in a film or two--Israeli agents wrestling with issues of morality. Bullshit. The implication seemed to be that assassination was okay as long as you had a conscience. As for innocent by-standers, Dean figured the Mossad was like any other outfit of its kind: some might agonize over the death of innocent by-standers, but most would shrug it off as one of the risks of war. And the more fanatical wouldn't concern themselves at all, as long as the by-standers were Arab, the only good Arab being a dead one. Just like in the West Bank: when soldiers couldn't get at the actual rock-throwers, they just shot any Palestinian youth who was handy.

But Zak said it probably really was Palestinian infighting. Palestinians were always killing off each other. The rival gang had simply mistaken Dean's father for the PLO official upstairs.

All Mossad hits are palmed off as Palestinian infighting, Dean replied. The U.S. press dutifully passed along that interpretation because the press was centered in New York, hardly a city with an unbiased view of world politics. Christ, the city was mostly Jews and Puerto Ricans.

Had Dean seen the photograph? Zak wanted to know.

Yes, he had.

How did he really know when, or under what circumstances, the photo was taken? He only had the DGSE's word for that.

Dean didn't argue the point. But he couldn't see the French external intelligence service had any motive to lie about it.

As one blues number started, some girls got up and begin dancing on the side of the room away from the stairs. Dean watched one of the girls with interest. Tight

blue jeans were one of his adolescent sexual imprints, and this girl had his number. He watched the girl's undulating bottom as he thought about the Haram es-Sharif, the Temple Mount, the focus of all this duplicity.

Es-Sakhra, the large Foundation Stone on the Temple Mount, was reputedly the spot where Abraham had built an altar to sacrifice his son. The Stone later served as the location of the Holy of Holies of the First and Second Jewish Temples. After the destruction of the Second Temple, the same spot was chosen by the Roman Emperor Hadrian for a new Tripartite Temple dedicated to Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva.

Then for a time the area had remained barren. When Omar Ibn Kittab conquered Jerusalem in 638 A.D., he was shocked at the Temple Mount's filthy condition and ordered it cleaned. At that time it was called Al Aqsa, "the distant place." It was the spot where a few years earlier Mohammed had ended his aerial night journey from Mecca, then ascended to heaven on the flying horse Burak.

Over the Foundation Stone, which marked the actual spot of Mohammed's ascent, the Caliph Abd-el-Malik erected an octagonal monument, the Dome of the Rock, in 691. El-Malik's son el-Walid added another building in 705: the Al Aqsa Mosque at the southern end of the Temple square. The latter structure was built on an unstable foundation of rubble, and was consequently destroyed by earthquake a number of times, and had to be repeatedly rebuilt.

Christian Crusaders took Jerusalem in 1099, and the first Christian Kings of Jerusalem used the Al Aqsa Mosque as their palace. Then administration of the Mount was turned over to the Knights Templar. Al Aqsa, which the Templars renamed Solomon's Temple, served as the Templar headquarters, and the Dome of the Rock became the *Templum Domini*, the Temple of the Lord.

"You sure you want to do this?" Dean asked Zak.

"Yes, I'm sure."

"Tell me something. When you enter the Temple Mount through the Moroccan Gate--that is, walking up the ramp past the Wailing Wall--there is a large sign, put there by the Chief Rabbis of Israel, saying under Jewish law it is forbidden for anyone to enter the Temple Mount area. Why is that? Why won't Orthodox Jews go there?"

"No one is qualified to sacrifice the Red Heifer," Zak said.

Dean listened to the band for a while. "I don't get it," he said finally.

"All Jews have been unclean since about the Sixth Century A.D."

"Why is that?"

"In Jewish law you become unclean in various ways. Like being around the dead bodies of other Jews, for example. Say you go to a hospital where there's a corpse or visit a cemetery. Once you become unclean you are prohibited from entering sacred areas like the Temple until you go through the cleansing ritual of Numbers 19. To do that you need the scouring power of the water of impurity, containing the ashes of a sacrificed Red Heifer. You take an unblemished Red Heifer, slay it outside the camp, and burn it with cedar wood, hyssop, and scarlet string. Then you put the ashes in the water."

"So why don't the Orthodox do just that?"

"Only a Jewish priest who is clean can sacrifice the Red Heifer. The problem is there aren't any clean Jewish priests, because they need the ashes of a Red Heifer to become clean."

"So there is no way out of the dilemma."

"Not for most Jews. They have to wait until the Messiah comes. Others theorize there might be Red Heifer ashes buried in a jar somewhere under the Temple Mount."

"But if it is forbidden them to enter the sacred ground of the Mount, they obviously couldn't dig for ashes."

"They could tunnel under. That would be okay, because sacredness extends upward, not downward. That's why El Al doesn't fly over the Temple Mount: it would be violating sacred air space. The flights to Johannesburg used to fly over it, but planes are now prohibited from doing that. But you could look for jars of Red Heifer ashes if you first dug a tunnel under the Mount, then searched in an upward direction while staying below the surface."

It made sense to Dean. Total sense. He now knew exactly what Larry Meier was up to.

* * * * *

No man can serve two masters, Zak thought to himself, leaving the meeting with Dean. But then, he, Zak, never had. Sure, he had led Dean to think his game was one of betrayal. Just as he had told Larry Meier what Larry Meier wanted to hear. But neither Dean nor anyone else knew who Zak's true masters were.

Zak didn't think of them as masters. What he was doing was . . . a joint operation. A breathing together. Half the time he didn't understand what he was doing himself. But it gave his life a higher, nobler purpose.

Early on the Hoova messengers had informed Zak they came from thousands of light-years in the future. He puzzled over the seemingly nonsensical statement for many days. Had he understood them correctly?

He remembered from high school physics that a light-year was a measure of distance, not of time. One light-year was the distance light travelled in a year: about six-trillion miles. How was it possible someone resided light-years in the future?

The answer came to him one day when he heard a friend say, "I live twenty *minutes* away."

His friend could have said, "I live five *miles* away." But knowing the actual distance was less helpful: depending on the speed of traffic it might take you five minutes to go those five miles, or it might take you an hour. Most people in daily life were more concerned with the time it took to get from here to there, so they used a time-measure of distance: twenty minutes away.

In a similar way, Zak realized, the Hoovans used a distance-measure of time: the number of miles they had to travel to get from Then back to Now. How far they had to travel depended on the rate of time flow. Zak wrote it out in the form of an equation. If T was the number of years the Hoovans came back into the past; D , the number of miles they had to travel to get here; and c , the speed of light in miles per year, then the expression

$$D - (cT)$$

would be invariant in any inertial frame of reference. Was that right?

Zak was attending Cal State Los Angeles at the time contact was made. Cal State L.A. was a commuter college perched on top of a semi-isolated hill, and the nearest free parking was in an ungraded dirt lot a quarter of mile away. Zak would walk from the lot to the edge of campus, then climb the wooden steps up the vertical hillside, arriving at the summit totally exhausted. From the summit's far side was a commanding view of the freeway interchange below.

Zak was an indifferent student. He worked most days for a roofing company, and his attendance at Cal State L.A. was dictated by its full selection of evening classes. He had Fridays off, however, and it was the one day he arrived on campus early.

Streaking was popular among students that summer, and one Friday at high noon four of them took off their clothes, and went running along the campus's central walkway. Their timing was impeccable. The college was seeking to end the fad, and the following week two other streakers were arrested and formally charged with indecent exposure. Plea bargaining was allowed, however, and the pair were released when they agreed to publish a confession in the student newspaper, urging any would-be future streakers to get psychological counselling and avoid a criminal record.

Zak remembered the streaking episode well, because Hoova made contact the next day. Zak was laying shakes at a house in La Crescenta, and had worked late to finish a section of roof. He would tack a one-by-four on top of the row below as a guide to keep the next row of shakes even. Then he would drive two nails through the top of each shake into the underlying wood of the roof. Next he would roll out a layer of tar paper to cover the row of nails, sliding it far enough down to secure against leakage around the holes, but not so far the paper would show once covered with another row of shakes.

Louie had come by during the afternoon to check on progress and to deliver the latest jokes. "Hey, Zak, you know the difference between a penis and a paycheck? . . . You don't have to beg your wife to blow your paycheck."

Zak had grinned at that one. Louie's wife spent a lot a money on clothes, but always managed to look like a tramp anyway.

"This lawyer is praying, `Oh Lord, give me that million-

dollar case.' The Devil appears, and says, 'You're asking the wrong person. I'll give it to you, but I want something in return.' 'Sure, anything,' the lawyer says. 'I want your soul, your wife's soul, the souls of your parents, and the souls of your three children.' And the lawyer says, 'Okay. What's the catch?' "

A few hours later it had become too dark to see, and Zak was rolling up the power cord of the circular saw. As he looked up at the mountains to the north, a bright light suddenly appeared. At first he thought a plane had just turned on its landing lights. But that didn't make sense: no landing approach angled down from the mountain crest. Then he sensed a warmth as the light fluctuated in a slow rhythm. He felt his own pulse, but his heart beat was more rapid than the cycles that came from the unknown plane.

No, not plane, he felt suddenly. Whatever he was seeing was alive.

The light vanished as abruptly as it had materialized. Something significant had occurred, Zak thought, but he wasn't sure what. He had a strange sense of anticipation which lasted the rest of the weekend. By Monday, however, he had pretty much forgotten the incident.

In the morning he begged off time from work to drive over to Wilshire to talk to the owner of the apartment complex where he lived. Zak himself was the resident manager, and got a free apartment and a minuscule salary in return for doing miscellaneous chores, but he was getting tired of unclogging garbage disposals for families who let their kids throw plastic jacks into the kitchen sink.

The owner's office was on the tenth floor, and Zak subconsciously noted that nine people got on the elevator in the first floor lobby. Each pushed a different button, lighting up floors two through ten. Zak was amazed. He began to calculate the odds of this

happening.

Under random ordering, nine people could fit into nine floors in 9^9 (nine to the ninth power) possible ways. But each getting off at a different floor was a case of sampling without replacement. Any one of the nine could get off at the second floor, any one of the remaining eight could get off at the third floor, etc. So there were $9!$ (nine factorial) total ways for the group of nine to each get off at a different floor. Thus the probability of what had happened was $9!/9^9$. Or about .0009. The chance was less than one in a thousand.

The elevator had a programmed voice that announced each arriving floor, and the last passenger excepting Zak got off on nine.

Zak arrived at the tenth floor an hour later.

Or by his watch it was an hour later. According to the building clocks, he had been between floors only a few seconds, and was easily on time for his appointment.

Zak didn't know what had happened to his watch. But that night as he was falling asleep, he remembered what had occurred just after the door closed on the ninth floor.

The elevator's programmed voice had begun to speak to him.

(to be continued)

The Magician is the author of other episodes of the Jack Parsons story (<http://zolatimes.com/jparart/Aparmenu.html>).

June 18, 1998

Jack Parsons &

The Curious Origins of the American Space Program

by The Magician

Part 12: Stairway from Heaven

In Philadelphia Homer Nilmot stewed. He had expected to be taken into Edward Lodge's confidence, but the information flow had been one-way. Homer didn't demand much in the way of salary and perks. But he wanted to feel needed. To be in the know. To be a part of the decision-making process. Yet after pumping him relentlessly about Oral Jerry Swagger's history, Edward Lodge had proceeded with the operation without making Homer privy to the details.

Homer had to know what was happening. That, he knew, had been one of the reasons he had broken with Oral Jerry Swagger. And, as in those days, he now found himself standing on a step ladder, pushing up the acoustical tile in the ceiling, and sticking his head through the opening to take a look around.

Nothing more than a tight crawl space above an aluminum frame. Was it structurally stable? His weight might bring the whole ceiling crashing down into the room.

It had been easier back at OJS headquarters in Pasadena. There, in the area above the fourth, or top, floor had been a small catwalk alongside the air conditioning ducts. So if you pulled the ladder up behind you, you could then move from office to office, dropping in at will after removing a ceiling panel and lowering the ladder like a stairway from heaven. It had been simple to bypass door locks and security alarms.

The best, safest time had been in the middle of the night, when he would make his way through Oral Jerry Swagger's desk drawers and filing cabinets, reading the letters and the memos, perusing the strategy papers he was normally denied access to.

There was no one to whom Homer could have justified his activities, in those days. No one but himself. They wouldn't understand his dedication and his desire to know. He just needed to understand, he had told himself, so that he could be of greatest assistance to the Work. So that he could make the maximum contribution. He wasn't stealing, trespassing, he told himself. But he had been well aware he would have been fired had he been caught in the act.

Homer looked around the crawl space. The path into Edward Lodge's office looked impossible. Maybe he could remove a panel just this side of the office wall, wiggle through, and come down immediately on the other side of the wall, bracing against office furniture or the wall itself. But this appeared dangerous. He would leave marks, dust. The trail would lead right back to Homer Nilmot's own office.

Homer sighed and replaced the ceiling tile. When someone took everything you knew, and then said thank you very much, and kicked you out of the room . . . Well, it felt like mental rape. A violation of a trust. What you have to tell us is important, they seemed to be saying, but what you think about what you are saying is irrelevant.

It was worse than that, even. For Edward Lodge had brought an outsider into his deliberations. The woman. The goddess. Trisha. When Homer had first seen Trisha around the office, he had asked Lodge if she was a Trans-Global employee. No, Lodge had answered. Was she a client? No. Well, what was she? A fellow traveler, Lodge had grinned. Just a fellow traveler. For a while Homer had thought Trisha was one of Lodge's

girlfriends. But that wasn't right either.

She was a fellow traveler who was involved in the operation against OJS, Homer had come to realize. When he had discovered that, he had almost spoken to her. Almost, but not actually. Women that beautiful terrified him.

Homer was sensitive to nuances. Back in Pasadena, he had first come across Jack Parsons' name in the bundle of letters Oral Jerry Swagger kept locked in his upper right desk drawer. It had been Homer's third or fourth middle-of-the-night visit to OJ's office, when he found the key hidden in the bottom of a hanging folder in one of the filing cabinets. The folder was labeled "Moriah" and contained some news clippings about the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Homer had tried the key immediately and it had fit. OJS had apparently placed the spare in an obscure location, but one easy for him to remember.

Homer had puzzled his way through the letters. The occasional references to Jack Parsons had always seemed cryptic, tinged with mystery, pregnant with meaning. But never explained.

Yet one thing had been evident. What the exact relationship had been between Parsons and OJS wasn't clear, yet the subject of Jack Parsons terrified Oral Jerry Swagger. And the letter writer was well aware of that fact, taunting the evangelist, and asking for money to help pay various medical bills.

Homer sat down at his desk and leaned back in his chair. He looked at the ladder. He would have to return it to the janitor closet before he left. He looked at his watch. It was only 8:30 p.m.

Then he thought of Sheri. She was Trisha's roommate: might she know something? No, it didn't seem plausible. Sheri was also Hermes' secretary. "We need a diversion," Lodge had said. And then he had set Hermes

on the track of Parsons' killer, sending Homer himself to recruit the "ontological detective" for the job. Homer was sure that Hermes and his secretary Sheri were that diversion. Just bit players, really, to stir the waters, and to give OJS the illusion he was being pursued by a demented ex-stock broker from Philadelphia.

But Trisha might have said something to Sheri. Why she was going to the West Coast. Or why her departure coincided roughly with that of Hermes. Or whatever. Who knows what she might have let slip?

8:30 was just 5:30 in Pasadena. Sheri might well still be at the office, in case her boss called in from the West Coast. Homer picked up the phone and dialed the number for Personal Paradigms Inc.

* * * * *

Sheri had had a good day. With both Hermes and Trisha gone, she felt generally lonely, even a little lost.

Hermes had called in that morning, in a rush.

"Parsons wrote something called *The Book of the Antichrist*. Do we have a copy in the files somewhere?"

"How did you hear about it?" Sheri wanted to know.

"Renny told me about it. I'll explain later," Hermes had said.

Renny? Was that a man's name or a woman's name? Sheri felt an immediate prick of jealousy that there might be some woman out in Pasadena helping Hermes in his search, while she was stuck back here in Philadelphia in the dark.

But after looking through all the magic files, Sheri had eventually found a copy in a different location, tucked away with some Christian interpretations of the Book of Revelation, the Beast 666, and so on. It was a stupid

filing system, Sheri had decided, much like creating an "anti" file where one placed material on the Antichrist along with scientific articles on the antiproton and political material on antidisestablishmentarianism.

She faxed a copy to Hermes at the Pasadena Hilton. Only afterward did it occur to her to wonder who would pull it off the fax machine, and whether they would read it before placing the fax in the appropriate guest mailbox. Oh, well. Pasadena was a weird place, and they had to be used to weird things like that.

Now she sat sipping frof and annotating the text of *The Book of the Antichrist*. Today's choice in frof beverages was an underground cola with phenylalanine, and it cleared her mind and made her heart go pitter-patter. She felt alive and excited. She planned to stay right on top of things, Renny or no Renny.

First paragraph:

Now it came to pass even as BABALON told me, for after receiving her Book I fell away from Magick, and put away Her Book and all pertaining thereto. And I was stripped of my fortune, (the sum of about \$50,000) and my house, and all I possessed.

Sheri was sure this referred to Allied Enterprises, the joint venture with L. Ron Hubbard and Betty. The idea had been to buy boats cheaply on the East Coast, and then to sell them on the West Coast, where they would bring a premium. Betty was the USC coed who had been Parsons sister-in-law, and then his mistress, before devoting herself to Hubbard.

Parsons had put up most of the money in the venture, about \$21,000, Sheri's information said. But Parsons had lost more money than this. \$50,000, it said here in the *Antichrist*. And he had lost the house on South Orange Grove, the one he had inherited from his father,

the one-time tycoon.

This all took place "after receiving [Babalon's] book". Allied Enterprises had been formed in January 1946 and was later dissolved in July 1946. So Parsons must have received Babylon's book before this--in 1945. That would have been when he was attempting to create a Moonchild with his new scarlet woman, Marjorie Cameron.

Sheri began flipping a pencil in the air, seeing if she could catch it by the point after two flips. It was ironic. Parsons, the Magician-Scientist "fell away from magic" at this time. And immediately things begin to go wrong. It was as though Parsons had cut off one of the founts of his genius and success.

Next paragraph:

Then for a period of two years I worked in the world, recouping my fortune somewhat. But that was also taken from me, and my reputation, and my good name in my worldly work, that was in science.

Two years. This would be approximately July 1946 to July 1948. What had happened? Parsons says he had gotten some of his fortune back, but then lost it. How? Along with his scientific reputation. Why? This was a mystery. None of the sources she and Hermes had consulted said anything about Parsons' activities during this two-year period. Hmm, hmm, hmm. A sip of frop.

And on the 31st of October, 1948, BABALON called on me again, and I began the last work, that was the work of the wand. And I worked for 17 days, until BABALON called me in a dream, and instructed me on an astral working. Then I reconstructed the temple, and began the Black Pilgrimage, as She instructed.

The work of the wand. That would be some form of sex magic. The wand was the penis. Was BABALON really just a metaphor for Marjorie Cameron? Some entity that spoke through her? Although now BABALON was speaking directly to Parsons: "BABALON called me in a dream, and instructed me on an astral working."

Then he "reconstructed the temple." This was probably a temple like the one at 1003 South Orange Grove, where the Agape Lodge had held their meetings. And then the Black Pilgrimage began. Right. What the hell was that?

And I went into the sunset with Her sign
and into the night past accursed and
desolate places and cyclopean ruins, and
so came at last to the City of Chorazin.
And there a great tower of Black Basalt
was raised, that was part of a castle
whose further battlements ruled over the
gulf of stars. And upon the tower was this
sign.

The City of Chorazin. Maybe Parsons was astral traveling. A soul (mind, nous, whatever) journey while his body stayed in California. Sheri had decided such journeys were not impossible, in principle. Was Parsons in the Middle East? Black Basalt. Wasn't the *kaabah* stone in Mecca constructed of Black Basalt?

And one heavily robed and veiled showed
me this sign, and told me to look, and
behold, I saw flash before me four past
lives wherein I had failed in my object.
And I beheld the life of Simon Magus,
preaching the Whore Helen as the Sophia,
and I saw that my failure was in Hubris,
the pride of the spirit. And I saw my life
as Giles de Retz, wherein I attempted to
raise Jehanne d'Ark to be Queen of the
Witchcraft, and failed through her
stupidity, and again my pride. And I saw

myself in Francis Hepburne, Earl
Bothwell, manipulating Gille Duncan,
that was an unworthy instrument.

Hmm. The past lives of Jack Parsons. The first one, Simon Magus, was the big bugaboo of the early church fathers. He had--according to their diatribe--been one of the primary early heretics. Simon Magus had tried to fly from a tower, or so the story went. Much like Parsons had tried to fly via his solid-fuel rockets. But Parsons had succeeded. Giles de Retz? Earl Bothwell? Sheri would have to look them up.

And again as Count Cagliostro, failing because I failed to comprehend the nature of women in my Seraphina. And I was shown myself as a boy of 13 in this life, invoking Satan and showing cowardice when He appeared. And I was asked: "Will you fail again?" and I replied "I will not fail." (For I had given all by blood to BABALON, and it was not I that spoke.)

As a boy of 13, this would be--what? 1928. Toward the end of the Roaring 20's. Parsons at 13 invoking Satan? The age of puberty. Sheri wondered what he had done and how he knew it was Satan and not some other spiritual imposter.

And thereafter I was taken within and saluted the Prince of that place, and thereafter things were done to me of which I may not write, and they told me, "It is not certain that you will survive, but if you survive you will attain your true will, and manifest the Antichrist."

What had they done to Parsons? You haven't been brainwashed until you've been brainwashed by the spirits, Hermes was fond of saying. Maybe Parsons' experience was positive. But maybe it was a spiritual

mind-fuck. Either way he had been through Chapel Perilous.

And thereafter I returned and swore the Oath of the Abyss, having only the choice between madness, suicide, and that oath. But the oath in no wise ameliorated that terror, and I continued in the madness and horror of the abyss for a season. But of this no more. But having passed the ordeal of 40 days, I took the oath of a Magister Templi, even the Oath of Antichrist before Frater 132, the Unknown God.

Frater 132 would be Wilfred Smith. The former head of the Agape Lodge whom Crowley had expelled. The one who had run off with Parsons' wife Helen. Apparently he was still around. This was in 1948, Sheri reflected. Crowley had died in December 1947.

And thus was I Antichrist loosed in the world; and to this I am pledged, that the work of the Beast 666 shall be fulfilled, and the way for the coming of BABALON be made open and I shall not cease or rest until these things are accomplished. And to this end I have issued this my Manifesto.

Belarion Armituss AL
Dagjal Antichrist

Jack Parsons
210
First revealed Oct. 31, 1948 e.v.

Well, at least Parsons had a mission.

The phone rang, and Sheri picked it up, expecting to hear Hermes again.

It was Homer Nilmot instead. Theme and variation on the letter "H", Sheri thought. Hermes was the Greek messenger of the gods. But "Homer"? That was a hick name. Why didn't Homer change it? Sheri thought all this. But what she said was:

"Yeah, Mr. Nilmot. What can I do for you?"

* * * * *

Zak gradually learned that Hoova was a sort of messenger. As best he could determine, Hoova, coming as it (as they?) did from the future, was in all probability simply a forward version of humanity itself. Hoovans had long since disregarded ordinary biochemical bodies and now existed as personality/character recordings in some unknown, but more permanent, medium. In that form they controlled their ships, which were, in truth, mobile homes. They were virtually immortal.

Hoova was only one genre of a hierarchy of messengers. At the top of the pyramid were the Nine Controllers of the Universe. Zak wasn't exactly sure what Controllers did, but he understood the Nine were responsible for his own contact.

Sometimes Hoova would leave messages on his telephone answering machine, or on the tape recorder which he left unplugged in a nearby desk drawer. After he had listened to a tape, he would later find it had erased itself. Sometimes the tape disappeared entirely.

To avoid socio-political disturbances, the Hoovans had elected to contact selected humans in a manner that would avoid much tangible evidence for their existence. Thus if their alien presence became psychologically intolerable to the public, an automatic process of reaction would reduce the credibility of such contact.

The Hoovans explained their conditioning process thusly: "The surge of interest in ufos will soon peak,

then gradually fall out of fashion. Then we will see what came in with the tide. We work in periodic waves. The force of each wave crests, then ebbs in preparation for a new surge. The ebb period is important, for it allows the debris and jetsam to drift away, leaving the sands clean for a new impression. Each successive surge, proportionate to its power, generates a foam of premature credulity and false or half-false contacts, along with a scum of books, talks, efforts, frauds, and talk-show clackings. During the ebb period, the latter are blown away by the winds of common sense. The lack of immediate re-inforcement allows the idle- and weak-minded to turn the inconstancy of their attention elsewhere.

"One of our most important pieces of work was to foster the rise of metaphysical sensationalism in *The Weekly World News*, *The National Inquirer*, and similar publications. The public is bombarded daily with news of Bermuda triangle disappearances, teenagers pregnant by Bigfoot, ufo crews in Moscow hospitals, Presidents who consult astrologers, three-headed babies who speak six languages, ghosts aboard 737s, killers possessed by a family pet, and secret races dwelling at the center of the moon. The sheer number of outrageous reports leads the educated public to believe none of them. The signal has been effectively obscured by a barrage of noise."

Despite the attempted explanation, it was not clear to Zak what Hoova was up to. Hoova frequently talked about peace and seemed to have an inordinate interest in the Middle East. Because, they said, they had first landed in Jerusalem thousands of years ago. Zak thought about it. If the Hoovans were really from the future, what the fuck were they doing in Jerusalem thousands of years ago? It was one more of a growing list of Hoova enigmas.

For a season Zak hypothesized Hoova was a group of Cosmic Clowns, out to have a good time by razzing the natives.

On one occasion Hoova informed him its agents had

infiltrated U.S. and U.S.S.R. military bases and had determined that the Arab-Israeli confrontation in the Middle East had increased the probability of nuclear war to nearly thirty percent. The Hoovans themselves, being recorded intelligences, were relatively impervious to the threat, but they had thoughtfully prepared an assortment of shelters for the more earthbound messengers.

Each shelter would furnish food and supplies for 100 people for approximately two years. No one would be permitted to bring into the shelter any electrical apparatus, watches with phosphorescent dials, or objects made from pure titanium.

Hoova had instructed Zak to maintain a prayer vigil for peace, but he had rebelled because they wouldn't tell him where the shelters were. Finally they had relented and said there was one near Dulce, New Mexico.

A shelter in Dulce will do me a lot of good in Los Angeles, Zak had reflected. He had erased the tape himself, and instead of praying for peace had gone out for pizza.

But, more often than not, he did what Hoova asked. He went over to Hollywood and Vine to witness a curiously-dressed individual get out of a black limousine, walk stiltedly to the corner, and disappear. He took one of the tapes recorded by Hoova, put it in a brown paper sack with the name "Sally Rand" marked in large letters, placed two empty mason jars on top of the tape, and left the sack on the doorstep of a house in San Marino. He drove out to the Mojave desert late at night and waited for an hour until a large aerial craft with blinking blue lights passed, then returned to his apartment at 5:00 a.m. to observe the light sunburn covering his body. He purchased a borrower's card at UCLA and spent hours researching Middle East history.

"Why do what they want?" Dean asked him once.
"Maybe they really *are* just jokers, sending you out to

play fetch like an obedient dog." Dean was one of the few people Zak told about Hoova. Dean and two childhood friends.

Zak mused: "I guess it's because I'm having more fun doing this than anything else I can think of."

Dean's question had been rhetorical. Dean didn't believe in Hoova for a minute. Zak obviously worked for the Mossad. How else could Zak have learned about his meeting with Larry Meier?

(to be continued)

The Magician is the author of other episodes of the Jack Parsons story (<http://zolatimes.com/jparart/Aparmenu.html>).

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Jack Parsons &

The Curious Origins of the American Space Program

by The Magician

Part 13: Sacred Tunnels

I am getting too old for this sort of thing, Larry Meier thought to himself, as he stooped to make it through the narrow passageway.

The concealed tunnel began innocently enough as just another branch of the archeological dig being carried out at the South Wall of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, the dig that had made Benyamin Mazar world famous.

Mazar looks for shards, the past, Meier reflected, while I make the future.

Since the age of 17 or so, Meier had always viewed himself as a maker of history, one who sees its forward progress and nudges it this way and that, while remaining himself unseen.

The tunnel sloped upward, and curved to the right. "Where are we now?" he asked the figure in front, which was much overdressed for the summer heat.

"Almost directly beneath Al Aqsa."

Al Aqsa. The Moslem mosque at the South end of the Mount. Meier recalled that in the late 60s, during the early days of the South Wall excavations, there had been an incident with some Australian. Up above, on the surface of the Mount itself. Denis Michael Rohan.

The name came back to him.

Rohan had been reading Christian literature that referred to the Moslem structures on the Mount as the prophetic "abomination of desolation". One day Rohan had thrown kerosene-soaked rags into the Al Aqsa mosque, setting it on fire. It had taken fire fighters four hours to put out the flames. Later, at his trial, Rohan made it evident he saw himself as the fulfillment of a prophecy in Zechariah. He would, like Israel, become a fire to the surrounding nations. And he would personally remove the offending Moslem abominations, Rohan had believed. Instead, Rohan had almost started a war, but had done no lasting damage.

Denis the Pyrotechnic Menace, Meier had called him at the time. Those sorts of wild-eyed fanatics were too erratic, too loony, to be really useful, except occasionally as assassins or as patsies. While not reliable on the job, they could be counted on to self-destruct afterward. No. The really useful types were those who were strongly religious, but not mystical. The ones that you just had to figure out how to convince that God wanted them to do what you wanted them to do. Then they would do your bidding without very much supervision. People like the Oral Jerry Swaggers of the world, who could be counted on to give money to your cause year after year because of their beliefs about prophecy. Or the Temple Mount Zealots, who would do the arduous work of digging tunnels, and making temple preparations, and, yes--when the time came--even smuggle in explosives past Israeli military intelligence and the Waqf, the Moslem authority that administered the Temple Mount. For the Zealots, it was sufficient they thought they were searching for an ancient urn of red heifer ashes, which would allow them to be ritually cleansed. Then they could enter the surface area of the Temple Mount, and begin construction of the Third Temple. Meier would explain to them the need for blasting materials at the right time. They trusted him: he delivered the money that made the project possible.

But without the red heifer ashes, all talk of destroying the Moslem structures and reclaiming the area for the Third Temple was just so much idle chit- chat. What was the point of getting the Arab abominations off the Mount, if many religious Jews still wouldn't come on? Moreover, when the tunnel blasts brought down the Arabic structures on the Mount, it would still not be certain that all-out war would erupt, especially if no sufficient sector of the Israeli population saw the hand of God in the sabotage.

That's where the miracle would come in. The explosion itself would be the mechanism that uncovered an urn of red heifer ashes. The ashes would enable believers to be ritually purified. The illusion would have to be perfect. Meier had several scholars working on it-- finding the right vase. The red heifer ashes would have to be properly burned and aged. And they would have to be exposed in just the right way and at the right time. Once religious Jews believed they now had the right to storm and occupy the Temple Mount surface, there would be no turning back.

Of course, luck might have it that the tunnels would accidentally turn up an urn of red heifer ashes before then. Such luck would simplify matters. No one Meier knew would hesitate to use explosives in that case. But Meier didn't believe in luck. The only hand of God that Meier had ever seen was the one attached to the end of his own right arm. And that right arm was going to make sure all the necessary ingredients were available.

The figure in front of him pointed to a hole in the side of the tunnel, and held his flashlight. Meier stuck his head through, and saw a small crevice that dropped downward in the dark.

"Cistern?"

The figure shrugged. "It's at least 100 meters deep. We've started using it for dirt disposal."

Meier paid careful attention to the religious expectations of the Zealots. Success was largely a matter of meeting those expectations in a consistent manner. So he noted doctrinal and historical points carefully, on matters to which he was personally indifferent.

Matters as simple as that of the temple location. There was scholarly disagreement over the exact location of the First and Second Jewish Temples on the Temple Mount area, because of the extensive changes and modifications that had been wrought by Romans, Moslems, and Crusaders after the destruction of the Second Temple by a Roman army under Titus in 70 A. D. The traditional view put the temple in the location of the present-day Dome of the Rock. But making this fit the historical record had some problems, and there were arguments for at least three other locations. One would place the temple north of the Dome of the Rock, where the present Dome of the Spirits (or Dome of the Tablets) is currently located. Another theory would locate the temple due east of the Western Wall, in the area of the Al Kas fountain, roughly midway between the current Dome of the Rock and the Al Aqsa mosque. A fourth location some argued for was the current site of the Al Aqsa mosque itself.

Tunneling plans were simplified, however, in that none of the Zealots gave credence to the conjectured northern location, so the main focus was in the areas of the El Kas Fountain and the Dome of the Rock.

One thing seemed apparent to Meier, as he listened to the debates. The current organization of the Temple Mount area followed a model designed for the Temple of Jupiter that had been built on the site by the Romans after the Bar Kochba rebellion in 132 A.D. The Roman Emperor Hadrian, one of the world's great builders, had cleared off all remains of the Jewish Temple, and placed the Temple of Jupiter on the Mount as a sort of Jew-repellent. He renamed the city Aelia Capitolina. Hadrian also constructed a Jupiter Temple in Baalbek, in Lebanon, using an identical layout.

In the Baalbek model, there was the Temple of Jupiter itself (a rectangular structure), along with a polygonal (in this case hexagonal) forecourt and propylaea. Just as on the Temple Mount there is the present-day rectangular Al Aqsa mosque and a polygonal (in this case octagonal) Dome of the Rock. In Baalbek, in between the rectangular temple and the polygonal structure which served as an entrance building, was a court area and a sacrificial altar. Similarly, on the Temple Mount, we find an equivalently proportioned court area between the Al Aqsa mosque and the Dome of the Rock. One record mentioned that an equestrian statue of Hadrian had been erected right over the spot where the former Holy of Holies of the Jewish Temple had been. If so, this would put the Holy of Holies approximately beneath the present Al Kas ablution fountain.

Hadrian had also constructed a Temple of Aphrodite, west of the Temple Mount, located at the site of the present-day Church of the Holy Sepulcher.

The Temple of Jupiter was subsequently razed by Christian invaders, and the Temple Mount surface area was left barren. Then the Arabs arrived, cleaned up the Mount, and built the Dome of the Rock and the Al Aqsa mosque. But it seemed clear, to some of those Meier listened to, that the Arabs had constructed the Al Aqsa mosque on top of the old rectangular Temple of Jupiter (which they erroneously believed to be the ruins of Solomon's Temple), while the Dome of the Rock replicated an octagonal structure that was part of the same original Jupiter Temple complex. The Arabs had simply built on the ruins of the old Roman Aelia Capitolina. Meanwhile, the location of the original Jewish temples remained a mystery, as the Romans intended it should.

Meier didn't care, one way or another. As long as the tunnels went to the right spots where he needed to deliver his explosives, and as long as he could properly weave his red-heifer magic out of what was believed,

then all would be well.

The current engineering problem was one of connecting up various tunnels that permeated the Temple Mount area, as well as creating new ones in locations of interest, such as the sub-surface area around the Al Kas fountain. This had not proven difficult, as the area bound by lines running north from the Double and Triple Gates at the South Wall was already peppered with underground halls. But to reach the Dome of the Rock itself, it would have made more sense, from the point of view of tunneling, to come from the north, or from the Warren's Gate area to the west. Doing so, however, would attract too much attention. So the Zealot diggers were heading north from around the Al Kas fountain, in an attempt to tie into the well-known cave beneath the Dome of the Rock. Once there, they would have to create an entry point without alerting the Waqf.

Digging progress was slow, to be sure. The Zealots, with their archeological picks, didn't want to damage any holy artifacts they might come across. Meier nevertheless took advantage of each visit to urge them on to ever speedier work.

"How much further?" Meier asked his overdressed guide.

* * * * *

Dean looked up from the shadows. Through the branches of a tree, he could see the evening star, Venus. There was no question that it was *her* star. He moved forward for a better view.

The pain shot through his shin, and he abruptly sat down on the earth amidst the leaves and other forest detritus. He had walked into a broken branch lying concealed in the darkness. Ouch. He felt like a fool. Because I *am* a fool, he thought.

He wondered if they would make love. Or whether they would ever again make love. That time . . . She had seemed to be rewarding herself for a task well done, that one time. Their love-making had been non-personal, but not impersonal. It had been non-personal, because there were no identities involved. No individuality was present, but rather only the fierce current of desire and its hungry satisfaction.

He was a fool, alright. That had been the most erotic experience of his life, and he would keep coming back, like a heroin junky, hoping to someday again feel like Jesus' son. *When I put a spike into my vein. And I'm rushing on my run. I tell you things are just not the same. I feel like Jesus' son.*

The fingers ran through the back of his hair. Thus she appeared, oftentimes, seemingly out of nowhere.

"Hurt yourself?"

"Not really. I bumped my shin in the darkness."

She settled on the ground, beside him. Only the silhouette of her hair was visible.

"What do you have for me?" she asked.

"I know what Meier is doing. He's using this red heifer thing to raise money and get tunnels dug under the Mount. Then he's planning to blow up the Dome of the Rock and the Al Aqsa mosque. Apparently he's bent on starting a war, for some reason or another. A war that the main government faction doesn't want."

"And Oral Jerry Swagger? How do you see his role?"

"I think he's just providing money for the bombs. Or the shovels. Take your pick."

Dean smiled in the darkness. He could not see, but felt, the return smile. They sat for a while in silence.

Finally Dean asked, "What about Lodge? Is he going to stop this? Stop the war?"

"He says he is. Maybe he will. Maybe he won't."

"I thought you were working with Lodge. Aren't you?"

"We have mutual interests."

"That's what I've never figured out. What mutual interests? What's your interest in the Temple Mount?"

Trisha didn't answer. Dean thought for a while, and tried a different tack.

"What's your interest in Jack Parsons?"

She laughed. "You don't know?" There was a hint of incredulity in her voice. Dean knew from experience that it was impossible to tell if the incredulity was real or feigned. Nevertheless, it made him feel stupid.

"No. Not really."

"Jack Parsons was my father."

Pieces of the jumbled mosaic seemed to settle into partial coherence. A chill went through Dean, and his heart began pounding. Except. Except for one thing.

"You're too young for Jack Parsons to have been your father."

"Oh, how old am I?"

Dean knew better than to try to answer.

After a while she said: "I am a moonchild. Jack Parsons' moonchild. Sometimes there are time skips in the effects of the ritual."

Some primal instinct forced Dean to look for her hands. His eyes were beginning to adjust to the darkness, but he still could not see her hands. He was looking for the dagger, he realized. Maybe she was telling him all this, because she was planning to kill him afterward.

And she was beginning to sound as crazy as Zak. But still, this could be his one chance to find out what was happening.

"So what's going on? What's all the deal with Jack Parsons? I mean, right now, with Jack Parsons?"

She understood his question. "It's all part of Lodge's psychological ops," she replied. "Meier, Parsons, and OJ all knew each other back in the 40s. Lodge is using Parsons to fuck with OJ's head. He hired this investigator from Philadelphia to look into Parsons' death. A guy named Hermes. My roommate works for him. Lodge will now make sure that OJ knows about the investigation. He expects OJ to spook. Then Lodge will weave his magic--whatever he is planning to do."

Dean thought about the answer. "OJ had something to do with Parsons' death?"

"Maybe. Lodge has this ex-disciple of OJ whom he uses as an information source. He--this disciple--says that someone was once blackmailing OJ with respect to something involving Parsons."

"How did they all come to know each other? I mean Jack Parsons, Larry Meier, and Oral Jerry Swagger?"

"It seems that Meier was involved in arms for Israel, back then, while still a teenager almost. Parsons helped out in that, supplying Meier's group with explosives. As for OJ? I don't know any details. He was briefly a member of Parsons' Agape Lodge before he went off and turned himself into a Christian evangelist."

"And you think one of them killed your father?"

Trisha was silent. Then: "Yes, I think one of them was responsible for the death of my father."

Dean's eyes again looked down, searching for the dagger. He took a deep breath. This is ridiculous, he thought. He looked up again at the sky, at Venus, shining like a jewel on a dagger handle.

After a time, Trisha spoke again, questioning.

"And Zak?"

"I think Zak's just a cut-out. He's obviously Mossad's tool. But he keeps telling me this bullshit story about The Nine, who are cosmic overlords of a sort."

"The Nine?" Dean heard a slight change in her voice. A tightening of the vocal cords.

"Well, they are supposed to be in charge," Dean said. "Actually Zak talks to a spaceship, he claims, operated by intelligences who have downloaded themselves into the ship's computers."

"What's Zak's role? In the operation?"

"Just to pick up cash from OJ, and to take it to a Chinatown location, where it will be deposited into various accounts, and then wired to Bank Hapoalim, to an account Meier set up."

"Why does Zak want you to film the operation?"

"Blackmail, I think."

"OJ or Meier?"

"Who knows?"

"Maybe it's just insurance. Maybe Zak just wants proof

he picked up and delivered the money," Trisha said.

"Yeah. But why would he need proof? For whom? If Meier or OJ say they were crossed, who is he going to show the fucking film to?"

Trisha was silent, thinking.

Then: "Tell me about Zak's Nine. Who are they supposed to be, again?"

(to be continued)

The Magician is the author of other episodes of the Jack Parsons story (<http://zolatimes.com/jparart/Aparmenu.html>).

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Jack Parsons &

The Curious Origins of the American Space Program

by The Magician

Part 14: The Tyranny of the Black Brotherhood

I had gathered a few things through Renny. The Jack Parsons Memorial Society ran an archive and lending library out of an old mansion near South Orange Grove. It turned out that *The Book of the Antichrist*, a copy of which Sheri had faxed me at the Hilton, was followed by Parsons' *The Manifesto of the Antichrist*. I had collected a copy of this, and copies of some related O.T. O. materials.

It was late in the afternoon on a warm and smoggy Pasadena day, and I decided to take the copies with me, and head for the park over in San Marino. In the hotel closet, I found an extra quilt, and I carried it with me out to the car. When I arrived at the park, I found a relatively secluded space, and spread the quilt over the grass in the shade of a tree. Much better. Now I could concentrate again.

My thinking was this: if Parsons thought he was the Antichrist, then he would undertake actions consistent with whatever it was the Antichrist was supposed to do. These activities were sure to stir up antagonism, even fanaticism, considering we were talking about the Big Bad Antichrist here. And Parsons was no ordinary Antichrist. This Antichrist was an explosives expert.

True, one coworker had described Parsons as the kindest man he had known. And von Karman had called him "an excellent chemist, and a delightful screwball" and noted he loved to recite pagan poetry to the sky

while stamping his feet. It seemed evident that Parsons was liked by colleagues as well as the ladies. But that wasn't the point. The point was that now Parsons was getting political. He was no longer content just to discuss "fortune telling"--as he had so quaintly described his occult activities to the Pasadena police-- in private. No. Now he was writing manifestos and declaring war. I wanted to get an idea who would have felt threatened by Parsons.

First, the *Manifesto*. I followed my standard practice: Read all the way through. Then go back and focus on details.

THE MANIFESTO OF THE ANTICHRIST

by Jack Parsons

I, BELARION, ANTICHRIST, in the year 1949 of the rule of the Black Brotherhood called Christianity, do make my Manifesto to all men. And I, THE ANTICHRIST, come among you, saying:

An end to the pretense, and lying hypocrisy of Christianity.

An end to the servile virtues, and superstitious restrictions. An end to the slave morality.

An end to prudery and shame, to guilt and sin, for these are of the only evil under the Sun, that is fear.

An end to all authority that is not based on courage and manhood, to the authority of lying priests, conniving judges, blackmailing police, and

An end to the servile flattery and cajolery of mobs, the coronations of mediocrities, the ascension of dolts.

An end to restriction and inhibition, for I, THE ANTICHRIST, am come among you preaching the Word of the BEAST 666, which is, "There is no Law beyond Do What Thou Wilt."

And I BELARION, ANTICHRIST, do lift up my voice and prophesy, and I say:

I shall bring all men to the Law of the BEAST 666, and in His Law I shall conquer the world.

And within seven years of this time, BABALON, THE SCARLET WOMAN HILARION will manifest among ye, and bring this my work to its fruition.

An end to conscription, compulsion, regimentation, and the tyranny of false laws.

And within nine years a nation shall accept the Law of the BEAST 666 in my name, and that nation will be the first nation of earth.

And all who accept me, the ANTICHRIST, and the Law of the BEAST 666, shall be accursed and their joy shall be a thousand fold greater than the false joys of the false saints.

In the name BELARION shall they work miracles, and confound our enemies, and none shall stand before us.

Therefore I, THE ANTICHRIST, call upon all the Chosen and elect and upon all men, come forth now in the name of

Liberty, that we may end for ever the tyranny of the Black Brotherhood.

Witness by my hand and seal on this day of 1949, that is the year of BABALON 4066.

What a couple of weird names: Belarion and Hilarion. It sounded like a vaudeville couple. Maybe Parsons was going mad, as John Symonds had alleged. All this making of pronouncements and proclamation of laws to be followed. However, it was hard not to like a lot of what Parsons was saying.

No matter what Parsons called himself, who wanted to be on the side of "lying priests, conniving judges, blackmailing police"? Who wanted to defend the "tyranny of false laws"? This was dangerous stuff. Parsons was attacking the established order, fraught as it was with corruption, and papered over as it was with fake religion.

How would the U.S. government react to all this? Not well, I suspected. I looked through some of the other papers and found a statement from a Agape Lodge member in 1940 that Parsons traveled "under sealed orders from the government". But in 1948 he temporarily lost his security clearance due to the charge that his membership in a "sex cult" was subversive. After a closed court hearing, the charges were dismissed in April 1949, and his security clearance reinstated.

But in September 1950 he lost his job at Hughes Aircraft because he was in possession of classified documents. Some of these, however, were ones from his Cal Tech days, papers of which he was a co-author.

Parsons argued that he was in the process of trying to convince the Israeli government to build a jet-propulsion laboratory and factory, and was using the documents only for background information. The Justice Department decided there were insufficient grounds for prosecution. But the Appeals Board was not amused, and withdrew his security clearance in January 1952.

So. The Antichrist wanted to build missiles for Israel. I tried to put this in perspective. Laying on my stomach on the quilt, I sketched out a brief chronology of Parsons' life, as I now understood it, in my notebook.

Oct 2, 1914: Parsons' birth.

1928: Jack Parsons, age 13, invokes "Satan" but reacts with "cowardice when He appear[s]."

1936: Parsons, age 21, shows up with his friend Ed Forman at Cal Tech wanting to build space rockets, something they have been working on for years. The GALCIT project is initiated under Theodore von Karman, with Frank Malina, Jack Parsons, and Ed Forman initially the key individuals. Money is always an issue, and Parsons and Forman later take jobs with the Halifax Powder Company in the Mojave desert.

1938: The Army Air Corps becomes interested in the research. Hap Arnold appears at the GALCIT laboratory in Pasadena wanting to know if rocket research could help him with the problem of air strips which were too short for takeoff of modern military planes.

1939: Parsons and his wife Helen (Northrup) join the Los Angeles (Pasadena) branch of Crowley's O.T.O. This group is known as the Agape Lodge, and is headed by Wilfred Smith. Smith and his wife have an innovative way of recruiting members via sexual seduction, according to member Louis T. Culling.

1940: The Army Air Corps takes over sponsorship of the GALCIT project. Parsons spends most of his time developing jet-assisted takeoff (JATO) units. Most of the JATO patents are in Parsons name. **December:** Jane Wolfe, a Crowley associate who is a member of the Agape Lodge, writes in her diary that Parsons travels "under sealed orders from the government." She also says she believes Parsons will be the future leader of the order.

March 1941: The head of the Agape Lodge, Wilfred Smith, writes Crowley that he had "at long last a really excellent man, John Parsons. And starting next Tuesday he begins a course of talks with a view to enlarging our scope."

1942: Parsons, von Karman, and others found Aerojet in order to build and sell JATO units to the Army Air Corps. Parsons leaves his position as head of solid-fuel rocket research at the Army Air Corps Jet Propulsion Research Project to take a similar position at Aerojet.

March: Jane Wolfe writes Crowley: "I believe Jack Parsons--who is devoted to Wilfred--to be the coming leader." She goes on to note that he was "'sold on the *Book of the Law*' because it foretold Einstein, Heisenberg--whose work is not permitted in Russia--the quantum field folks, whose work is along the 'factor infinite and unknown' lines, etc."

July 1943: Crowley wants to get rid of Smith and appoint Parsons head of the Lodge. But he has problems doing so, because there is a good bit of loyalty to Smith, including on the part of Parsons himself. Crowley writes an Agape Lodge member named Max Schneider: "As to Jack; I think he is perfectly alright at the bottom of everything; but he is very young . . ."

1944: Aleister Crowley expels Wilfred Smith from the OTO for turning the Agape Lodge into a "love cult". Smith leaves with Parsons' wife Helen, who had taken the place of Smith's previous mistress, Regina Kahl, as high priestess in weekly performances of the gnostic mass, in which Smith served as high priest. Crowley

appoints Parsons as head of the California O.T.O. in Smith's place. Helen's sister "Betty" (as she is known around the house at 1003 S. Orange Grove) moves in with Parsons. Parsons, Theodore von Karman, and others found the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, near Devil's Gate Dam in the Arroyo Seco-- nearby the location of many of their early rocket tests.

August 1945: Parsons and Lafayette Ronald ("L. Ron") Hubbard are introduced by a science fiction illustrator named Lou Goldstone. Goldstone often visits at Parsons' place, and one day he brings Hubbard with him. Hiroshima and Nagasaki have just been devastated by atomic bombs. The world is amazed. Many people are elated. The social consequence, only seven years later, when every Pasadenan would be contemplating wearing a "colorimetric dosimeter," a chemical radiation detector, to tell who would live or die in an atomic raid, was the furthest thing from anyone's mind. Association with someone like Jack Parsons, conversant with JPL and Aerojet projects, is heady fare for Navy Lieutenant L. Ron Hubbard, on temporary leave, who is in any case eager to take up residence in a Bohemian house bustling with attractive women. After sleeping with as many of them as possible, Hubbard then creates turmoil by taking up with Betty, Parsons' own girlfriend. Parsons tolerates this (just as he had previously tolerated Smith's affair with his wife Helen) because, he says, he needs a magical partner, and he believes Hubbard can play that role.

Dec. 5, 1945: Hubbard is officially discharged from the Navy. He immediately applies for a pension, claiming various disabilities, and heads for Pasadena, where he moves in with Parsons. Betty (Sara Elizabeth Northrup) again devotes herself to Hubbard. Parsons, sans Betty, looks for a replacement, and decides to attract one through magic ritual. But Parsons has bigger things in mind also.

January 1946: January 4: Parsons and Hubbard begin work on a magic ritual to attract a Scarlet Woman, through which Parsons will conceive a Moonchild.

January 15: Parsons, Betty, and Hubbard start a company called Allied Enterprises. Parsons puts up most of the money, which he has from the sale of his Aerojet stock to General Tire. **January 18:** Parsons and Hubbard are in the Mojave desert, when Parsons realizes the experiment has succeeded, and tells Hubbard: "It is done." He returns home and finds the artist Marjorie Cameron, on visit from New York, waiting for him. "She is describable as an air of fire type with bronze red hair, fiery and subtle, determined and obstinate, sincere and perverse, with extraordinary personality, talent and energy," Parsons wrote.

January 4 to March 4, 1946: Parsons writes an account, called *The Book of Babalon*, of the whole magick working. **Jan 19-Feb 27:** Parsons continues to invoke Babalon with the help of Hubbard. **Feb 28:** With Hubbard gone on a trip, Parsons, invoking Babalon by himself in the Mojave desert, receives a revelation of 77 clauses, which he calls *Liber 49*. He claimed it was the fourth part of the heretofore three-part *Book of the Law* (Crowley's revelation). This claim upsets many Agape Lodge members. **March 1-3:** Following the instructions in *Liber 49*, Parsons and Marjorie Cameron spend three days in ritual sex, with Hubbard in attendance, in an attempt to conceive a moonchild.

March 6, 1946: Parsons writes Crowley: "I am under command of extreme secrecy. I have had the most important, devastating experience of my life." He goes on to say: "I believe it was the result of the IXth degree working with the girl [Cameron] who answered my elemental summons. I have been in direct touch with One who is most holy and Beautiful as mentioned in The Book of The Law. I cannot write the name at present. First instructions were received direct through Ron the seer. I have followed them to the letter. There was a desire for incarnation. I do not know the vehicle, but it will come to me bringing a secret sign. I am to act as instructor guardian for nine months; then it will be loosed on the world. That is all I can say now . . ." Crowley was annoyed with Parsons' secrecy, and wrote back he had no idea what Parsons was talking about.

April 1946: Hubbard and Betty head to Florida with Allied Enterprise money to purchase a boat on the East Coast, to be sold on the West Coast. Parsons doesn't hear from them subsequently, because they are in fact taking a luxury vacation with Parsons' money.

July 1946: Parsons tracks Hubbard and Betty to Miami, where he discovers they have purchased three boats. He files suit in Dade County court and gets possession of two of the boats, and part of the third. Parsons then dissolves Allied Enterprises, and Parsons and Hubbard part ways. But the first boat Hubbard had acquired with Allied Enterprise money had been the *Diane*. Hubbard would afterward combine *Diane* (which may have been another name for Babalon) with the then popular term *cybernetics* (Gk. "steersman") to form "Dianetics", the label Hubbard gave the philosophy and system of mind control which he created by combining his own science fiction concepts with the magick he learned from Jack Parsons as well from as the writings of Parsons' mentor Aleister Crowley. Later, mostly for tax reasons, Dianetics was renamed "Scientology."

August 1946: Hubbard, age 37, marries Betty (Sara Northrup), age 21. Hubbard is still married to his first wife at the time.

October 1946: Parsons, age 32, marries Marjorie Cameron, age 24. Crowley thinks Parsons has gone off the deep end with the Babalon working. Crowley writes Louis T. Culling: "About J.W.P.--all I can say is that I am very sorry--I felt sure that he had fine ideas, but he was led astray firstly by Smith, then he was robbed of his last penny by a confidence man named Hubbard." Sometime during 1946 Crowley suspends Parsons as OTO head.

December 1946: Crowley further writes: "I have no further interest in Jack and his adventures; he is just a weak-minded fool, and must go to the devil in his own way. *Requiescat in pace.*"

1947: Parsons becomes involved in arms for Israel, according to von Karman.

Dec. 1, 1947: Aleister Crowley dies.

1948: Parsons loses his security clearance for doing classified government work, because "of his membership in a religious cult . . . believed to advocate sexual perversion . . . organized at subject's home . . . which had been reported subversive." He also breaks up with Marjorie Cameron. This break-up lasts until late 1949 or early 1950.

Oct. 31, 1948: The events recorded in *The Book of the Antichrist* begin. He has put away magick for two years, when Babalon calls.

March 1949: Parsons successfully defends himself against the subversion charges in closed court, and the Appeals Board reinstates his security clearance.

1949: Parsons writes *The Manifesto of the Antichrist*.

September 1950: Parsons loses his job at Hughes Aircraft for being in possession of classified documents, which he was using to persuade the Israeli government to build a jet-propulsion laboratory and manufacturing plant.

January 1952: The Appeals Board again revokes Parsons' security clearance.

July 17, 1952: Parsons, while making preparations for a trip to Mexico, where he will build an explosives factory for the Mexican government (he tells von Karman), is killed by an explosion at his garage laboratory at 1071 South Orange Grove at 5.08 p.m. He is pronounced dead an hour later at Huntington Memorial Hospital. His mother commits suicide after hearing of the death.

So. If Parsons had been involved in arms for Israel in 1947, as von Karman said, this would have been just prior to the founding of the state in 1948. This would probably imply continuing relationships afterward, hence leading to his 1950 proposal for an Israeli jet propulsion lab. Parsons was undoubtedly contemplating building solid-fuel missiles as one of the by-products of the jet propulsion work. That was, after all, his specialty.

This had to be the key. Parsons' beliefs about the Antichrist, and similar beliefs--say concerning the Knights Templar--would have led Parsons to focus his attention on Jerusalem. Combine this with Parsons' need to make a living.

Who would Parsons have upset?

Parsons calling himself the Antichrist was powerful stuff. It would upset Christians concerned with the same matrix: namely, the notion of an end-time clash of Christ and Antichrist around Jerusalem.

And where would that lead? The image of Oral Jerry Swagger whom I had seen on TV in the room at the Hilton, talking about the final battle on the Plain of Esdraelon by Mount Megiddo (Armageddon) came to mind. To someone like Oral Jerry Swagger, I thought. Someone who is into beliefs as equally apocalyptic as those of Parsons himself. Given the right incentive, I thought, someone like that might want to kill the Antichrist. The Antichrist Jack Parsons.

Where was Oral Jerry Swagger based? I wondered. At the moment, I decided, he seemed as likely a possibility as any to look into. I wrote his name down in my notebook, and drew a box around it.

I closed my notebook, rolled over on my back and closed my eyes. Even though the lead might be tenuous, I felt strongly confident I was on the right track. The world was at peace. Perhaps I dozed for a moment.

When I opened my eyes again, the light had turned pinkish. I turned on my side and looked through the tree at the sky to the west. The sun had just set, the sky glowed with a reddish hue. One star was visible: the evening star, Venus.

It was time to go, I thought. I lay back for a moment. Then I saw the man staring at me. He was only a few feet from the quilt, short, rotund fellow, black hair, slicked back, perhaps olive skin--hard to tell in the light--and something in his hand. He raised his right arm as he lunged at me, and I saw it was a hand ax.

Instinctively, like a thousand times on the school playground or the wrestling mat, I swung my right leg up and caught him in mid-abdomen, simultaneously rolling to the left, sweeping my arm trying to catch his and deflect the ax from my face. His momentum and the pivot of my leg carried him completely over and to the side. I scrambled up and saw that he had dropped the ax as he had come down hard on the ground. I started to reach for it, but then a blur in the corner of my eye caused me to leap to one side. This one was taller, dressed in black, but with a pasty face. In shock, I realized it was the ghoul I had met at the Palladium, in Philadelphia. The ghoul picked up the ax. I turned and ran through an opening in a hedge, then turned again and ran parallel to the hedge. I glanced back to see if anyone had come through the opening. No one. I did a couple more turns. Where was I going? Was it safe to try for the car? I decided that sounded more attractive than wanderning around on foot in a strange part of town. I was a little disoriented, and it took me a minute to locate where I had parked. When I saw the car, I stopped a moment, looked around. Then I raced for the car and hopped in. Had the car been rigged? I turned the key. The engine started and I pulled out. I looked in the mirror and through the windows as I departed. There was no sign of either of them.

I thought about going back to the hotel. I passed a shopping center. There was a hardware store open. I

went in and purchased a full size ax, and a large chef's knife. The blade on the latter was sturdy and razor sharp. There was a sporting goods store nearby. I bought a baseball bat, a nice Louisville slugger.

When I got back to the Hilton, I parked in the garage. I decided to leave the ax in the trunk. I kept the knife in my right hand, but pulled a shopping bag over the blade, wrapped the bag around my hand, and held the end along with the knife handle. People would be able to see I was carrying something rolled up, but not what exactly. I picked up the bat in my left hand and went into the Hilton.

"Any messages for me?" I asked at the desk. There weren't any. The woman at the desk looked at me strangely, with hostility. Maybe she was just reacting to my body posture, I thought. But maybe not.

At the door to my room I leaned the bat against the wall, and slipped in the card with my left hand. As the door lock clicked, I shoved open the door with my foot and picked up the bat. The room was partially lighted. The maid had turned down the covers, and left the bedside lamp on. I put the bat down on the bed, dropped the paper bag from the knife in order to get a better grip, and checked the bathroom and the closet. Everything seemed normal.

Normal. I turned on the TV, trying to return to a normal frame of mind. Maybe I would call Sheri and chat for a while.

Only then did I realized I had left my notebook back in the park with the two ghouls.

(to be continued)

The Magician is the author of other episodes of the Jack Parsons story (<http://zolatimes.com/jparart/Aparmenu.html>).

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Jack Parsons &

The Curious Origins of the American Space Program

by The Magician

Part 15: Mute Testimony

Craig sat in Oral Jerry Swagger's outer office waiting. You always had to wait, even when OJ summoned you frantically. OJ's office was a revolving door of high-level traffic at this time of the day. That's just the way things were in \$100 million-a-year organizations, Craig reflected.

Craig turned his attention back to the report. Occultists in the military? Well, he had always known that was possible, whether or not they had anything to do with the cattle mutilations. He had seen some weird shit in his Washington days. But an Antichrist was hard to take seriously. Preachers needed an Antichrist the same way the Pentagon needed the Russians. It didn't hurt to have a bogeyman to wave around before the faithful right before you dug into their pockets.

Craig read over the details. A woman on a ranch in Colorado was up late one night when she heard the sound of a helicopter. She stepped outside onto the second floor balcony which encircled the house, giving her 360-degree surveillance. There were stars in the sky but no lights from the chopper, nothing she could see. She could hear it though--it was the third time the sound had mysteriously emerged in the last three days--and she felt a fear she couldn't define. Her dog had come out onto the balcony with her, and it began to growl and back up into the house. She followed the dog inside and called the sheriff's department to report the helicopter with no lights.

Later that night as she sat up in bed with a back ache, she saw the chopper for the first time. The clear yellow light came in low from the bluffs to the north. She went out to the balcony and watched it pass by and gradually disappear. Afterward, with the help of an illustrated book, she identified the craft as a Sikorsky Black Hawk.

The following morning she found one of her cows lying on its side in a nearby pasture. The coyotes hanging about had tipped her off to the presence of the carcass. The long grass around the animal was somewhat trampled down, but there were no signs of a struggle. The cow's right ear had been removed in a jagged circle. There was a small amount of blood in the ear cavity. The right eye had been extracted, along with a strip of hide. There was also blood in the eye socket. All but three inches of the tongue had been severed, and the jaw and teeth on the right side of the face had been exposed through surgical removal of the lips and hide.

The other end of the cow had not fared any better. About one-half the udder had been carefully excised, as well as the bottom half of the remaining two teats. The rectal area had been cored out, leaving a hole about eight inches wide and six inches deep.

The coyotes remained in the neighborhood over the following days, but they refused to actually approach the carcass itself.

The question of the mutilations, or the "mutes," had preoccupied Craig for months. He had reports of hundreds of similar cases. Craig wanted to know the answer, but not out of any deep intellectual curiosity. Ever since his days as a political dirty trickster, he had viewed information simply as a mechanism for influencing behavior. But to play the game the right way, one needed to avoid surprises. Surprises were unexpected events that could upset the scenario one was developing. To avoid surprises it was always better to know what was really going on.

Craig's most recent job before going to work for Oral Jerry Swagger had been more boring, but easier. He had been employed by a government department as a fabricator of documents for release under the Freedom of Information Act. There he had had more control, because he got to see all the available records ahead of time. There were no surprises, at least with respect to the files. Once he had a clear picture of what was available, he would go to work: altering a sentence here, inserting a paragraph there. Though illegal, the result could be explosively effective: the recipient of the information lived with the fantasy he was using the FOIA to force the government to expose the truth, and consequently had all his guards down when slipped a doctored document.

Craig hadn't known exactly what to expect when he had joined OJS's secret investigative agency. The "Antichrist Squad", as it was informally called. The questions were different and the intended audience was different, but it was political work of the type Craig was used to, and he was paid good money.

Plus he was able to pick up a few extra bucks by cross-filing all his reports with Trans-Global Consultants in Philadelphia. Craig had known about Trans-Global's interest in religious organizations from his campaign days, so he had put in a call to Edward Lodge shortly after receiving the employment offer from OJS.

One thing Craig was sure about: the mutes weren't due to coyotes. As one farmer had said to him once: "If it was a coyote that did it, that coyote must have brung his scalpel. And his flashlight. There were bright lights flashing all around those parts about an hour earlier. No, there weren't no coyote tracks around that carcass either. Or tracks of any other creature. No, I figger it must have been some of them ufos."

Craig had snorted at the mentioned of ufos. You expected farmers to be wily in the ways of coyotes. But in other ways they were just dumb hicks. Craig didn't

care much for Oral Jerry Swagger's explanation either. But that was the one he was being paid to verify, and he would do his damndest to come up with supporting evidence.

OJS said it had to be Devil worshippers. Who else would mutilate cattle for body parts and blood? And thousands among OJ's television and radio audience would send for the book or the video expose. There was profit to be made in unveiling the wicked deeds of the ungodly.

Craig himself personally believed the mutes were nothing to get excited about. It was just the U.S. Department of Agriculture, or whoever, conducting routine research on chemical and biological weapons. Everyone knew about the similarities between human and bovine nervous and reproductive systems. Better to do in a few cows at a farmer's expense than to do in the farmer himself.

Biological warfare experimentation would explain the surgical post-mortems. But Craig was still puzzled at the clandestine use of choppers. Even Senator Jack Schmitt of New Mexico had discussed the mystery helicopters when he had co-sponsored a mutilation conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico, in 1979. That had been eight years ago. The mutes, meanwhile, continued to accumulate.

Oral Jerry Swagger, for his part, was sure that a cult of military Satanists using government helicopters were at work among the farmers who wrote to him from rural America. No wonder there was a decline in America's God-given military strength: there were Devil worshippers in the Pentagon. OJS planned to go public with all this on his weekly telecast once Craig had sufficiently documented the charge.

But, at this rate, that day was still some months away. OJS would never get his documented proof if he kept sending Craig and the others on spontaneous chores like

whatever it was that was brewing now.

* * * * *

Oral Jerry Swagger wasn't ready to talk to Craig yet. Craig was an unbeliever, one of the few who worked in his organization. And OJ needed to think how to properly present the task at hand. OJ used unbelievers to fight fire with fire. They were carnal, disposable, and could be assigned ungodly tasks that believers should not properly perform.

Like taking care of the inquisitive snoop who was staying at the Pasadena Hilton.

OJ paged through his Antichrist file. Wasn't it ironic, OJ thought, that "CFR" appeared on al Dajjal's forehead?

OJ had never determined why Jack Parsons had chosen to sign his name al Dajjal. Al Dajjal (or "Dagjal", under an alternative spelling), the Antichrist in Islamic theology, was--according to OJ's researchers--supposed to be one-eyed and marked on the forehead with the letters "CFR," standing for cafir: infidel. He would supposedly appear between Iraq and Syria riding on an ass and followed by 70,000 Jews. His reign would last forty days. The first "day" would be a year, the second day a month, the third day a week, and the remaining thirty-seven days would be just ordinary days. Al Dajjal would destroy every city but Mecca and Medina, which would be guarded by angels. Finally, al Dajjal would be slain in Jerusalem by Jesus at the Gate of Lud. Jesus will be assisted by the Inman Mahedi, and afterward Christianity and Islam will become a single religion.

CFR. Cafir. But the initials CFR stood also for the Council on Foreign Relations, the group which now largely determined U.S. foreign policy.

Was it only a coincidence that the Council on Foreign Relations symbol was a picture of a man riding an ass?

OJ's thoughts returned to the immediate task. It had been one of his viewers who had alerted him to the investigator staying at the Hilton. Her attention at work at the hotel desk had been aroused by receipt of a faxed copy of *The Book of the Antichrist*, by one Jack Parsons, followed by some other faxes which mentioned OJ's name. She had called into the main switchboard, and had been transferred to OJ's executive secretary, who had taken the information and thanked the lady. Hermes T. Megistus was the hotel guest's name. OJ, Jack Parsons, *The Book of the Antichrist*, the message said.

It was probably this guy, Hermes, who had broken into his house that night, placing an altered copy of *The Book of the Antichrist* on OJ's desk, frightening him out of a weary sleep.

Well, Mr. Hermes wasn't going to get away with this. OJ suddenly came to a firm decision. He would tell Craig he was an appointed "avenger of the blood." OJ himself would anoint Craig in this role. Craig would then have the authority to administer God's justice without personal sin.

OJ knew Craig was capable of killing. He had done it before. Oh, he wouldn't look you in the face while he cut your throat. No, Craig wasn't that type of guy. But Craig knew how to arrange little accidents. And he enjoyed it. "It's just research," Craig had explained to OJ, that one time before.

* * * * *

Edward Lodge was watching a basketball game in his office when the call came through.

"Yeah?"

"Mr. Lodge. It's Craig. From California."

"Where are you calling from?"

"It's okay."

"Okay."

"Someone gave me a job."

"Yeah?" Lodge knew that Craig was referring to Oral Jerry Swagger.

"I'm looking at another investigator. He's from out your way. That's why I thought I would call."

"What's his name?"

"Hermes T. Megistus."

"Never head of him," Lodge said.

"Okay. Just thought I would check. Didn't want to step on any toes."

"I appreciate that," Lodge said.

"I'll be copying a report as usual."

"I look for it." Lodge severed the connection. He reflected. Things were moving ahead of schedule. Maybe too quickly. Lodge buzzed his secretary.

"Yes, Mr. Lodge?"

"Find Homer Nilmot. Tell him to pull Hermes T. Megistus off the case he's working on. Tell him to tell Mr. Megistus thanks, and to send us a bill, but we no longer require his services."

So, Lodge reflected. OJ must have had his ear to the ground, to have already learned of Hermes' investigation of Jack Parsons. Unless that woman,

Trisha, had somehow planted a bug in his ear prematurely. Where was she, anyway? She hadn't checked in for two days.

Thinks were heating up. And Lodge liked to know where all the players were at all times.

* * * * *

Sheri sat at the bar in the Knave of Hearts on South Street in Philadelphia, waiting for Homer Nilmot. The room was lit with the soft glow of candles. Fresh flowers on the tables. It was romantic, and definitely not the place she wanted to be meeting Homer Nilmot at. But he had suggested it, and she couldn't really resist the food there. She was dying for the peach soup and the roast duckling.

What did he want to talk about? He had seemed to imply it was business. The Antichrist, he had said cryptically.

Sheri took a sip of cote du rhone. The Antichrist would have to be a woman, she suddenly realized. It was obvious when she thought about it. It was a naturally occurring duality, a change of polarity from protons to antiprotons, or sex from yang to yin. Christ was male, so the Antichrist would be female.

Like any new idea, this thought energized her, lifted her spirits. The female Antichrist. It was a mallet with which she would bludgeon Homer Nilmot for inviting her here to this romantic spot, when she would rather be with . . . well, Hermes. The messenger of the gods. The magician. The god of borders. She wished Hermes would return and drag her across the border into Mexico, or Canada, or anywhere.

Sheri signed, some of her elation evaporating. With Hermes and Trisha gone, it was lonely. She hadn't heard from Trisha, and barely from Hermes. What was Trisha doing in LA? All her instincts told her it was related to

Jack Parsons, same as Hermes, but Trisha had not been forthcoming, the conversation devolving into the usual sorts of Trisha-style paradoxes and parables.

Sheri found it impossible to be angry with her roommate. Because at heart she worshipped Trisha and yearned to be like her. Trisha is a goddess and I'm just a groupie, Sheri thought. That's all I'll ever be, a groupie. There was always a distance between them Sheri couldn't seem to close.

Sheri saw Homer Nilmot come past the wall into the bar area. "Hi. Sorry I'm late." He took a seat beside her at the bar.

"Get you something?" the bartender asked.

"I think I'll have what she's having." Homer point at Sheri's wine.

There was a moment of silence. Then Sheri spoke:
"Well, what can I do for our noble client?"

Homer shuffled on his barstool awkwardly. Finally, he spoke: "Well, frankly, I was hoping you could help me figure out what has been going on in California. But I guess it doesn't matter anymore. I just got a phone call. My boss is pulling your boss off the case."

(to be continued)

The Magician is the author of other episodes of the Jack Parsons story (<http://zolatimes.com/jparart/Aparmenu.html>).

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Jack Parsons &

The Curious Origins of the American Space Program

by The Magician

Part 16: My Name is Zak

Some would say I am crazy. I'm not. The crazy ones are the people who point radio telescopes into deepest space and search for alien messages. What a waste of tax dollars. Do those idiots really think that aliens think this way, that they would have the slightest inclination to cater to human notions of high-tech communication, to first make contact with scientists and their latest batch of tinker toys? Why would aliens deal with such moronic setups when they could just make contact with that finest of receivers, the human brain, or plug into the ordinary methods of communication, like the telephone, fax, mail, radio, TV?

My name is Zak. I didn't ask to be contacted by the Hoova messengers. Nor do I think I am someone special to be communicating with them. The prophet Jeremiah was called from the womb, so it is said, but I doubt I would have ever become involved if I hadn't been working on the roof that day. They told me they dwell in spaceships, which they wear like mechanical bodies, and that they come from our own future. Why would they lie? But even if they lie, who could explain their ability to keep track of my own activities, my own thoughts? If this is all a trick by some group, they must have an army of surveillance people. I don't believe it's possible. And if it were possible, why would they care about me? And no, I am never looking or listening when the messages appear on my answering machine. But if this is a hoax or a prank, why does the answering machine tape often erase itself, or even disappear

entirely, while I am still in the room? No one has come and gone, and I have felt no chills from passing ghosts.

I am not a mystic. I've never cared for religion or spiritual things, at least before now. I dropped out of synagogue when I turned thirteen and refused to attend anymore. My mother was always trying to send me off on one of the summer programs to work on a kibbutz in Israel, but she couldn't make me go. Oh, I like working. I like tinkering with real things, using my hands. I enjoy construction, and mechanical projects. But there was an abundance of summer jobs right here in Los Angeles, where I could be with my friends. I am an American. Yeah, maybe a bit alienated because I am a Jew, but not as half alienated as I feel toward my own family when they try to force me into modes I didn't want. We never could have French wine at home. Some offense the French committed against the Jews or Israel--I forget what. She--my mother--went out of her way to buy imported Israeli wines. Awful stuff. That's why I don't care for wine much, I guess.

I am a down-to-earth kind of guy, and so are most of my friends. I didn't suddenly become a raving lunatic just because I started talking to spaceships. But I was conscious of how it might look, so mostly I kept it to myself. I told Jeff. Jeff has a good head on his shoulders. I had taken classes with Jeff. He was good at history and biology, but he was also a cabbalist, and thought about the structure of the world in terms of the tree of life, and he was also interested in gematria and other weird stuff.

And Dean. But only because Dean asks too many questions. I occasionally run errands for Hoova. Sometimes the schedule is awkward, and people wonder where I've been, and I make up some innocuous answer. But Dean is too sharp. That crazy Arab thought I was working for the Mossad, or some spy agency such as that, so I finally told him about Hoova, so he could relax. Surprisingly, I only managed to convince him more than ever that I was working for the Mossad. The whole notion is ridiculous. Though my father does

know a few of those people. I think he met them at synagogue, or through friends there.

What I like about Dean was that he has been everywhere. He is only a little older than me, I think, maybe even younger, but he has been all over the Middle East, and he has been to Jerusalem, and in most of the countries of Europe. Hearing him talk, seeing things through his eyes, makes me think the world is brimming with infinite possibilities. I've never been out of California much, really. But so what? It has everything--the beach, the mountains, the desert, and up north the forests.

Anyway, back to Jeff. Jeff is a cabbalist, and I was sure he wouldn't think the notion of Hoova was all that weird. We had known each other a long time. But to my surprise, he was pretty upset. "Do you know what happens to most people who get involved with elementals?" he asked. Then he answered his own question: "Their lives are usually ruined. They lose their job, their friends, their wives/husbands/lovers. Their business goes bankrupt. Often they themselves go insane, or end up in some abandoned hole where whatever is chasing them can't find them, writing their revolutionary manuscripts that are going to overthrow current notions of science or revoke the rules of society so humans live by the same conventions the spirits live by."

It annoyed me he talked about spirits. Look, this is science, I said. The spaceships come from the future, and they are controlled by humans. Future humans who live inside the electronics of the spaceships themselves. Flying saucers, not angels, I said.

There are parallel realities, Jeff said. When something oozes through the barriers between them, when humans make contact with the other, their nervous systems are not equipped to deal with something so alien to this space-time. So they interpret the phenomena in terms familiar to them, ending up with explanations that are rife with contradictions, but which are now an

embedded memory, the mind's best attempt to impose order on chaos. Spaceships, angels and demons, fairies, elementals, strange animals--these are all flawed human interpretations.

Then Jeff told me about Jack Parsons. I remember this now, because Dean called the other day and asked me if I had ever heard of a guy named Jack Parsons. I said yeah, and he seemed really surprised. What Jeff had told me was Parsons had been doing magic experiments in the Mojave desert. Shortly thereafter this was the same area where George Adamski had met a Venusian, and spaceships from Venus. And then after that Kenneth Arnold saw flying disks up in the Northwest in July 1947 and the flying saucer age began. "Parsons opened a hole in the fabric of space-time," Jeff said, "and something flew in."

For a while I was impressed with this story. Parsons had been trying to invoke a goddess named Babalon. Apparently one aspect of Babalon was Aphrodite, or Venus. And George Adamski had met a "Venusian" and even traveled on their spaceships, he said. So it kind of fit. But later I read about the great "airship" wave of 1897, and I wasn't so convinced anymore. The airship wave happened all over the western part of the U.S. It was like a ufo wave, except instead of modern spaceships there were dirigibles, and this was consistent with the technology of the time. Sometimes people would come out of the airships, tell people they were from Kansas, and this was an experimental aircraft, and so on, all of which would later prove out false, but sounded so reasonable to the people who were observers. But sometimes there were other, alien, creatures in the blimps, and once a farmer saw an airship trying to lift one of his cows up inside with a sort of hoisting belt. When the farmer gave pursuit, the airship dropped the cow, and the farmer later lodged a complaint with the local sheriff.

What about it? I asked Jeff. Here we have a ufo wave fifty years before Kenneth Arnold. Jeff thought about this a while. And then he came back and said that there

were occasional bleed-throughs between realities because of terrestrial or solar events, just like there were sometimes in ritual magic, like the kind Parsons practiced. But these holes opened and closed again. What Parsons had done was create a *permanent rip*.

I guess this made sense. I mean it was possible. But he had explained it this way only after I confronted him with the 1897 airship wave. So I was still somewhat suspicious. But it also made me question whether I should take Hoova at face value. Jeff had given me *Passport to Magonia*, by a Frenchman named Jacques Vallee. Vallee seemed to show that Irish encounters with "fairies" had all the aspects of what modern people reported as contact with ufo occupants. Jeff also showed me a picture of "Lem", an elemental Aleister Crowley had been in contact with, from his magical workings. Crowley's Lem painting had appeared in a Greenwich Village art exhibit in 1919. Lem looked like one of the "grays" of ufo lore. The oval-shaped head. Although the eyes were closed in Crowley's portrait, and weren't the big cat eyes you usually see. But all this did make me think.

Despite everything, I tried to explain to Jeff why it was important to interact with Hoova. It was hard to explain. It was like in the Tanach there were all these stories about interactions with the gods or angels or Yahweh or whoever. But these were just old stories that were already distorted before they were written down. And then they got edited and edited again, and the Baal's crossed out and Yahweh inserted, or vice-versa, and who knew what it all meant?

But here I was dealing with the source--or at least some source. If you want to call it the other, then I was in contact with the other. And the way to learn about it, it seemed to me, was to play with it. To perturb the system, as computer people might say. I'm not much into computers, so let me use another analogy. Say you wanted to learn about a cat. Some idiots would say: Let's dissect the cat. That way we can observe its internal catness. Others will say: Show me the evidence

of this cat. Give me some fur. Let me measure and do a chemical analysis of this alleged cat fur. But the way to learn what a cat is all about is to play with it. To feed it and not feed it. To watch it creep up on a bird through the grass. To watch it move to the one spot in the room where the sun is coming through the window.

Interaction and observation. I got a better handle on things when I read Jacque Vallee's *The Invisible College*. He called ufos a control mechanism. Their function, as best I could understand, was to change people's beliefs. But his calling it a control mechanism gave me confidence in what I was doing. "I'm probing the mechanism as it probes me," I told Jeff. "I'm trying to figure out what it's all about." I didn't want Jeff thinking I thought I was some sort of prophet or holy man. And I was cautious about doing anything I didn't want to do. My parents couldn't make me pray, and I was damned if I was going to pray for peace in the Middle East because Hoova wanted me to. "Let those idiots blow each other up," I said to Dean. I think Dean agreed. That's when I decided that the true Semites--ones like Dean and me--lived in the desert of Los Angeles. Jerusalem was inhabited by the remnants of some ungodly Nazi experiment. Let them keep fighting over the water and the oil, and killing each other like they've done for the past several thousand years. What was Hoova's point? Pray to whom or what? Here these people come from thousands of years in the future, and their bodies are electronics and hardware--the spaceships themselves. Do they really still believe they were created in God's image? I mean, is God a spaceship? And if he is, then what about us? We have two legs and two arms, so we're not in God's image. It's all self-contradictory. So you can throw the Tanach out the window. Like I say, pray to whom or what?

Maybe I shouldn't say, or think, some of this. But I never could understand why so many people who shouldn't have been involved cared what happened between two tribes in the Middle East. Yet, at the same time, I found myself suddenly in the middle of world events because of Hoova. Hoova always seemed to have its finger on the latest trouble spot. I found myself

going about my daily life in Los Angeles, yet somehow I was a participant in events happening around the globe. It was a heady feeling. Take Larry Meier. A casual acquaintance of my father. Some sort of explosives expert or spook. We were at a dinner party and out of the blue we start talking and he ends up asking me to do him a favor. To pick up some money from Oral Jerry Swagger and to deliver it somewhere downtown. Once upon a time I would have said no, thinking this was really weird. Oral Jerry Swagger, for Christ's sakes. But I knew it was because of Hoova, and I said sure, no problem. It was just another one of those strange coincidences that keep happening to me. And Hoova was watching. They left me a message--to videotape the entire transaction. No reason given, but this was the type of thing that appealed to me, and which I liked doing for Hoova. I asked Dean to do the taping, since he had done that sort of thing before, and since he already knew about Hoova. I didn't tell him who I was doing it for. But later Hoova warned me to keep Dean out of sight, because Dean knew Larry Meier, had met him in Paris once. I casually asked Dean about it and it blew his mind. But it goes to show you Hoova is what it claims to be, or at least has amazing powers. I certainly had no idea that Dean knew Meier, much less about their meeting in Paris. So it wasn't like I was making all this up, hallucinating or something. You can say: Those tape recordings, you just imagined them. It all happened in your mind. Hoova is all part of the hallucination. Well, if that true, then how did Hoova know about Dean and Larry Meier?

So now I am going to have dinner with OJ, which is what people call the Christian evangelist. At L'Orangerie over in West Hollywood, for Christ's sakes. OJ goes there all the time. We are going to ride in OJ's limo from Pasadena over to L'Orangerie, and have dinner. Then when I come out I will be carrying a briefcase of money. I will get into a different car to take me to my next destination. I don't know how Dean is going to get a video of us at the table in L'Orangerie. It worries me some, but that's Dean's problem. And Hoova's.

(to be continued)

The Magician is the author of other episodes of the Jack Parsons story (<http://zolatimes.com/jparart/Aparmenu.html>).

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from *The Laissez Faire City Times*, Vol 2, No 40,
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Jack Parsons &

The Curious Origins of the American Space Program

by The Magician

Part 17: Stab Your Démoniac Smile to My Brain!

I awoke with a start. The room was dark. Apparently I had turned off the TV and bedside lamp and fallen asleep.

Then I heard it again. A noise in the hall. I reached out to the bedside table and closed my fingers around the handle of the chef's knife. Someone walking down the hall.

I went to the door cautiously, quietly braced my foot against the bottom edge, and looked through the keyhole. Someone was disappearing around the corner. I couldn't tell whether the figure was male or female.

I'm a sitting duck, I thought. Staying here in a public place, the Pasadena Hilton, checked-in with a credit card. Anyone could locate me. I ought to get moving. Disappear somewhere randomly. Now.

I had left an imprint of my credit card with the desk downstairs, so all I would have to do would be to leave my key in the little executive check-out folder in the room, and depart.

I turned on the bedside lamp and looked at the knife in my hand. I didn't really need it on the way to the car, I decided. So I wrapped it in a bag and laid it aside to pack with the rest of my things. I hastily threw everything into the travel bag, zipped up all

compartments, and slipped the carry strap over my shoulder.

I picked up the baseball bat and looked through the keyhole again. There was no one in the hall. I let the door click shut behind me, walked to the elevator, and hit the button for the first floor. I encountered no one on the way out to the garage.

I put the travel bag in the trunk with the ax. After looking around, I put the baseball bat in the trunk also. I started the car and headed for the nearest freeway. I would drive and think for a while, and then decide where to go.

As I drove, I thought about the two ghouls. The two men-in-black. The large pasty-faced one and the short fat one. I had met one of them at the Palladium just after talking to David Wilson. It was from his flier that I had learned about the Jack Parsons Memorial Society. Now I had come out here to California, and run into Renny of the same group.

Helpful, likeable Renny? It didn't seem possible he would be involved in something like this. Attempted murder. Or David Wilson either, for that matter.

But maybe it was naive thinking like this that had nearly gotten me killed.

Jack Parsons had been killed also. Then it hit me. Who was it that had been harassing Parsons when he died? The U.S. government. At the time he died, the U.S. government had just taken away his security clearance, for the second time. Why? Because he had "classified" documents—mostly ones he had written himself years earlier. So it had to be simple intimidation. And why the persecution? Because Parsons wasn't controllable. Because Parsons was going to break the monopoly. He wanted to build a jet propulsion lab for Israel. It was probable that he was motivated by necessity, at least in part. Cut out of the center of things in the U.S., and

ostracized professionally, he would naturally seek to use his talents elsewhere, where he could profit from them. A JPL for Israel, an explosives factory for Mexico (the latter was the purpose of his trip, Parsons had told von Karman). Who knows what else. Parsons was escaping the control of the U.S. government.

No, the U.S. wanted its jet propulsion monopoly to continue—the monopoly on missiles and certain types of explosives. Here at home all the profits were to be funneled to defense giants like General Tire and Rubber. There was no room for individualists like Parsons. So when he had tried to sell his talents elsewhere, they had killed him. As simple as that. The Army ordinance experts had arrived and cleaned up after the "two" explosions. This was followed by a blizzard of contradictory cover stories—a different one for each person's taste. Parsons was sloppy. No, Parsons was a careful researcher, but he was a devil worshipper and got what he deserved. No, Parsons was a genius, but there was a mysterious "death angel." Everyone was allowed (even supplied with) his own pet theory—but all of the stories were bullshit because the U.S. government had killed Parsons.

So who was trying to kill me? The government? No, that didn't make any sense. Even if there were iron-clad proof of what had happened 35 years earlier, who would care? "Yeah, we killed him. So what?" No. What was happening to me was related to something I couldn't fathom.

I drove at random from freeway to freeway. It seemed like hours, but it was still dark out, so it couldn't have been that long. Eventually I found myself headed out into the desert. Mountains closed in around the sides of the pavement. The cliffs looked like the Cyclopean ruins of ancient fortifications.

After a while I realized I had seen no other cars for some time. I looked in the rearview mirror. There were no headlights from on-coming traffic behind me. I slowed down. Maybe I should turn around somewhere

and head back into the city. Then I saw the desert sand was covering the highway in front of me. I came to a stop. I left the headlights on and stepped out to look at the road.

I stepped out of the car into a thin layer of sand. I scrapped a small furrow with my shoe. It was just sand, but seemed to have a hard undersurface. Sand on the pavement. I looked at the road behind me. More sand. The highway had disappeared.

This is ridiculous, I thought. I'll wait until daylight to move the car. But what should I do until then? I didn't want to sleep in the car. The very idea gave me that sitting-duck feeling again. I opened the trunk and took out the baseball bat. Then I turned off the car lights and locked the doors. It was pitch black. I looked up at the cliffs. They were faintly silhouetted against the sky. I began to walk in the direction of one of them.

I walked carefully but the sand was firm. I gradually got over the feeling I might be walking on quicksand. I finally reached a slope and made my way up the steep incline and onto a large slab of rock. I could now see somewhat better in the darkness, but looking back down the way I had come there was only blackness. Further away in the distance, on the other side of the road, was another line of cliffs, and I could see the whole craggy outline against a background of bright stars.

This was a good spot to camp I decided. I'll wait for daylight here. I looked around me for a place to put the baseball bat, and somewhere to rest my back. There was a smaller rock nearby and I propped the bat against that, and then I sat down, feeling for a niche in the cliff face. I kept looking behind me and that's when I saw the faint glow of blue light.

It seemed to be coming from a spot slightly above. I worked my way up a couple of yards higher. It was a small cave. The cave tunnel sloped steeply downward and the blue light seemed to be arising from below. The

light beckoned.

It would be a close fit, but I could worm my way in head first. No telling what was in the tunnel. Snakes, probably. Maybe bats or other animals. I retrieved the baseball bat to push along in front of me. But when I started to rest it on the tunnel floor in front of my head, it almost leaped into my face.

Gravity was pulling the bat down toward me. I pushed myself partly into the hole and I could feel gravity's force pushing me back. It was as though I were crawling *upward* in the tunnel, instead of downward. I slipped back out to get the feel of the ground around me. Yes, I was standing vertically, more or less. Gravity was *down*. I looked in the tunnel toward the light again. It also was clearly *down*. But as I crawled into the tunnel, gravity tugged at me to come back out.

Gravity was reversed in the tunnel. Shit, I thought. Now I *have* to see what's in there. I put the bat aside, out of my way, and began to pull myself downward through the cave, bracing my feet against the sides. I could hear faint music—the voice of a choir.

For some reason, a phrase kept popping into my head. "Stab your demoniac smile to my brain!" I tried to recall where I had heard it. It seemed distinctly familiar—something hovering on the borders of my mind, but keeping just out of sight around the corner.

The cave opened into a small room. I could sit up and look around. There was a faint bluish light lightly illuminating everything, but I couldn't detect its source.

Maybe I'm being fried by radiation, I thought. Then I heard a voice. "Not radiation. Radiance."

It was Trisha. Sitting motionless, smiling, perhaps laughing at me.

"What are you doing..." I started. Then I realized I

sounded ridiculous, even to myself. *What are you doing in a cave?* I had started to say. Jesus. *What am I doing in a cave?* So I said:

"What are you doing in Southern California?"

"What are *you* doing in Southern California?" she said. Just like Jesus in the New Testament. Answering a question with a question. Clearly two couldn't play this game.

"I'm looking for Jack Parsons' killer," I said. I didn't expect her to have a clue what I was talking about. Unless Sheri had said something. Sheri. Sheri might have told her I was here. Not that that helped explain much. The two of us in a cave. Nothing made any sense.

"So am I," Trisha smiled. "So, who do you think it was? Larry Meier or Oral Jerry Swagger?"

I realize then that I was insane. I had driven randomly from Pasadena and I had ended up in a cave. With my secretary's roommate—one of the most gorgeous women, if not *the* most gorgeous woman, in history—and she had used a name that I had only thought about in my private thoughts. Oral Jerry Swagger. The other name I didn't know. I hadn't a clue who this "Larry Meier" was.

If I am insane, I thought, I might as well play this out. If I am insane, aren't I supposed to already know what she is going to say next, since I'm making it all up? If so, I am still going to have to wait for her to say it. Because I haven't a clue. Right brain, talk to my left brain. Whatever.

Then I realized it was my turn to answer. So I told her my theory it was the U.S. government that had killed Parsons.

Trisha nodded thoughtfully. Then we sat there for a

time. Neither of us felt a need to speak.

Finally she stood up. "I have to go," she said. "Be safe. Are you going back the way you came in?" She pointed to the cave tunnel. I looked at it, angling upward above me. There was daylight at the top of the tunnel.

"Yes, I guess." I didn't want her to leave. "How are you going?"

"Here," she said. She smiled. There was a copper door in the wall, and she opened it. Copper—the metal of Aphrodite, of Venus, I thought irrelevantly. She stood there looking at me. She didn't invite me to follow her.

"Wait," I said. "When I was coming down here, I kept hearing the line of a poem, 'Stab your demoniac smile to my brain!' It was that night. You were there. The Mauvaise Arts Ball. Something happening that night. Something... in Jerusalem." Then I remembered. *The Temple of Aphrodite*.

"Oh, that," she smiled. "It was just something that happened to two people."

"Who? Who were those two people?"

I wanted her to stay. I wanted her so much. I thought I would burst into flame, like a spontaneous combustion victim.

She smiled even brighter. A face that would launch a thousand aircraft carriers, I thought. "Maybe it was my mother and Jack Parsons," she said.

Then her face became totally expressionless. "Or maybe it was you and me. Or maybe some of all of the above."

The copper door slammed behind her and I was alone.

(to be continued)

The Magician is the author of other episodes of the Jack Parsons story (<http://zolatimes.com/jparart/Aparmenu.html>).

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Jack Parsons &

The Curious Origins of the American Space Program

by The Magician

Part 18: Bloody Diochondra

Dean was watching it all from the car. The two external cameramen had caught Oral Jerry Swagger and Zak entering the restaurant. OJS had been carrying the briefcase with the money. The internal cameraman would film and record part of their dinner conversation. Then . . .

Here they came. Zak was carrying the briefcase now. They were shaking hands. Three cameras going. The man inside had followed them out and was making no effort to be non-obtrusive. He caught OJS with his mouth dropping open as he looking directly into the camera lens.

Zak came over and got into the car, two cameramen following him, filming. One of them got into the back seat. Zak opened the briefcase and the cameraman leaned forward, filming the money.

"Where to?" Dean asked.

"Chinatown," Zak said. "I deliver the money and we—they—generate the wire transfer records."

"I sure hope you know what you are doing," Dean muttered, as he started the car.

"Relax," Zak said. "You'll get paid shortly. Cash." He tapped the briefcase. Hoova had told him he could keep

ten percent. That would be enough to pay Dean, and a few bucks left over for himself. Zak was in a good mood. All the stuff for Hoova had been voluntary—a freeby. Now something was coming back.

True, Larry Meier hadn't mentioned the part about the ten percent. But that was Hoova's problem. Ten percent. A tithe. Zak snickered to himself. A tithe of a tithe. Ten percent from money OJS had collected as tithes and offerings from his followers.

Hoova had told him to leave the tapes under some Mason jars in a paper bag marked "Sally Rand" in the same place as previously.

"Chinatown!" Zak yelled. "Chinatown here we come!" Dean only glanced at him and drove in silence.

* * * * *

Craig hit the button in the Hilton elevator. The woman who had called in to headquarters wasn't there anymore. Vacation or something. But the suspect, Hermes T. Megistus, was still in his room. He hadn't stirred for twenty-four hours, apparently.

Craig just wanted to pass by. Check the location of the room number. Any excuse to deal with the endless boredom of waiting for the suspect to make a move. What was he doing in there anyway? Watching TV? Shacked up with some whore?

Craig stepped out into the 10th floor and checked the location of the room number. Down this way. Here it is . . .

The door was slightly ajar. *Shit!* Craig thought. It was three a.m. in the morning. It couldn't be the maid. So—was the suspect there or not? Obviously he had come in or out—but no one had bothered to close the door. Maybe the suspect had just gone down the hall for some ice. Craig looked behind him. No one. But in that case

there ought to be a light in the room. The room was dark.

Craig hesitated. Then he knocked on the doorjamb.

"Mr. Megistus? Hotel security. We noticed your door was open."

He waited. Nothing. He listened. No sound.

Craig pushed open the door and slipped inside, fumbling for the light switch. He hadn't quite found it yet when he felt the sharp point. A sting in his solar plexus.

He was still fumbling with the blade in his belly when he blacked out.

* * * * *

Edward Lodge was watching a basketball game to pass the time when the STU-III rang on his desk. It was a new product that gave an encrypted communication session.

Lodge didn't really trust it. But at least he knew who was calling when it rang.

"Yes," he answered, never taking his eyes off the TV screen.

"Um, hmm," he said several times as he listened. Then:

"Sanitize the trail. We don't want it leading back here."

He hung up the phone and yelled at the TV: "Shoot! Shoot!"

* * * * *

Oral Jerry Swagger had gotten up early that morning.

He was dressed in his morning outfit—suspenders, red shirt, bow tie—when he went out for the paper on the front lawn. Usually the housekeeper delivered it at 7 a. m. along with breakfast. But it was 6:30 and OJ was impatient for the news.

The paper was half-way down the stone path to the front gate. OJ opened up the *Los Angeles Times*, and stood there, reading and shaking his jowls at the sin and corruption of the world.

Only gradually did he become aware of some blemish on his spacious front lawn. The lawn had long ago been replanted with dichondra, which gave a uniform green, in place of the patchy and fickle grass.

It was a human figure. OJ walked cautiously across the dichondra for a closer look. The man was laying face down.

He tapped on the man's shoulder.

"Get up!" he commanded sternly.

The man—still drunk—didn't move.

OJ grabbed his shoulder, and with some effort flipped him over. It was Craig. His employee—the one looking into the military Satanists. The one taking care of that Jack Parsons matter.

Craig's throat was slit open with a large gash. His intestines were partly hanging out through his shirt.

OJ felt a little sick. He went back into the house and called his attorney, Randy Stader.

Stader will know how to handle this, OJ reflected. He felt quite numb and calm.

Will the Parsons' horror never cease? he wondered.

(to be continued)

The Magician is the author of other episodes of the Jack Parsons story (<http://zolatimes.com/jparart/Aparmenu.html>).

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Jack Parsons &

The Curious Origins of the American Space Program

by The Magician

Part 19: Axe Me No Questions

I dozed off for a while. When I awoke, I could see bright sunlight at the top of the tunnel. I looked around but there was no Trisha, no copper door. I wasn't surprised. Still, I checked the wall carefully and clawed away some of the dirt. Nope. No copper door here. Just daylight and sanity.

I looked at the tunnel with some suspicion. I had crawled *down* the tunnel, with gravity trying to pull me back up. So, logically, I would have to work my way *up* the tunnel, being careful that gravity didn't accelerate me along and spit me out to the external world. I tossed a rock part way up the tunnel. It came rolling back down toward me.

I stuck my torso partly into the tunnel. No suction. Gravity was pulling me down. So, it was a weird tunnel. No matter from which direction you entered it, it pushed you back. *Get out of me!* it seemed to be saying. I worked my way through it, and stood up outside in the warm sunlight. It was mid-afternoon.

Down below, my car stood on a dirt road that ended at the cliff. For off in the distance I could see a highway with two-way traffic.

I sighed, looked for the baseball bat, and took it down with me. I got in the car and tossed the bat against the other door in the front seat. The gas gauge told me I had 1/8 of tank left. I started the car and headed back to the

highway. There I turned back in the direction of Los Angeles. At least that part was easy. Los Angeles was always to the west, as long as you weren't at the beach.

I turned on the radio and found a station. They were playing a song by Shocking Blue. I laughed out loud. *Venus*. Then came the news.

"And now the news from KJIZ, brought to you by Dusty Trail Carburetors, the carburetor of the future.

"There has been a bizarre new development in the Oral Jerry Swagger case. Early today the body of one of the television evangelist's employees was found on the front lawn of Swagger's Pasadena mansion. According to police sources, the man's throat had been cut and he had been disemboweled with a butcher knife.

"A church spokesman, attorney Randy Stader, suggested that Satanists were responsible for the killing."

(The voice of Randy Stader.)

"We regret immensely the tragic death of Mr. Craig Knowles, and extend our condolences to his friends and associates at this time of sorrow. Mr. Knowles was recently engaged in an important investigation concerning what appear to be a coterie of Satanists linked to the U.S. military, who were believed to be responsible for a wave of cattle and even human mutilations throughout the western part of the U.S. We can only speculate that members of this group took revenge on Mr. Knowles for getting too close to the truth."

(The voice of the newsreader again.)

"However, confidential police sources tell KJIZ that the Pasadena police are pursuing the possibility that Craig Knowles' death was the result of a love triangle. These sources speculate that at the time of his death, Mr.

Knowles was having a homosexual affair with the older Mr. Swagger, and that he may have been killed by a jealous lover. KJIZ has been shown photographs of what appear to be Mr. Swagger as a young man, engaged in sex with another unidentified man. These sources imply that Mr. Swagger has been a practicing homosexual for much of his life, and that the death of Mr. Knowles has to be considered in that light. While these sources say Mr. Swagger is not a suspect in the case, a note found in the shirt pocket of the deceased reads: "I can't live without your love."

"In other news, Israeli police reported today that they have arrested a group of orthodox extremists who have been planning to blow up the Temple Mount. According to Israeli authorities, the group had hoped the incident would precipitate an apocalyptic war between Jews and Arabs, and hasten the coming of the Messiah . . ."

I turned off the radio and drove in silence for a while. Much as I tried to suppress it, the news report on Oral Jerry Swagger was bothering me a lot. Finally, I could stand it no longer and stopped the car beside the road and opened the trunk. *Killed by a butcher knife.*

I checked each compartment of the travel bag for the chef's knife. I couldn't find it anywhere. I had wrapped it in protective covering and put it in with the rest of my things back at the Hilton. Hadn't I? Well, it wasn't there now. I checked the passing traffic, and waited for an appropriate gap. Then I slipped the axe out of the trunk and tossed it out to the side of the road. I got back in the car and drove on.

I entertained myself with some consoling thoughts. Even if I had left the knife in the room, and the maid had found it, there was nothing to connect me to Oral Jerry Swagger. Just my thoughts. And thankfully no one could read those. I had speculated that someone like Oral Jerry Swagger might have killed Parsons. That was all. And I didn't think that anymore.

Except. *Except for the notebook.* I had left my notebook in the park when the two ghouls attacked me. It was my last entry: *Oral Jerry Swagger.* It seemed obvious to me now. I was being set up for a murder charge. True, it hadn't been Oral Jerry Swagger that had been killed with a butcher knife. But my butcher knife was missing. The police had probably found it near the body of this Craig character. The story would be: I was stalking Swagger, hiding out near his mansion. But I had run into Craig, the noble investigator of Satanic matters, and killed him. Look: here is the purchase order for the knife. Look: here is the notebook. Look: he bought an axe also. Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, what do you think was on this Satanist's mind?

Jesus. The more I fled, the bigger the trail I left behind. *My fear has come upon me. Job 3: 25.* The land of Uz, I muttered to myself. I drove for a while checking the exits.

Well, I have no choice, now, do I? There is nothing I can do. I have to disappear.

* * * * *

Sheri slept late. She looked at the clock. She was supposed to be at the office in a few minutes.

She didn't move, but instead snuggled a little deeper into the pillows. With Trisha and Hermes gone, Sheri felt at a loss. Her life seemed directionless. As much as she hated to admit it, her purpose in life was basically defined by her roommate and her employer. Who knows? Maybe they were working together. Way out there, somewhere, in Los Angeles.

She didn't really believe that, but the thought left her feeling left out, lonesome, and depressed. Trisha could have anyone she wanted. Leave Hermes alone.

Sheri sighed. She got out of bed and looked in the mirror. Her hair was disheveled and her face looked a

little puffy. Why can't I be like Trisha? Well, maybe I can, she thought, with sudden determination. I'll wear something sexy to the office. Just for me. Maybe the short skirt I wore when Hermes took me to Copa. Okay, maybe *I* took *him*, but he had said *yes*, hadn't he? But something more than that. What?

No panties! Brazilian-style. The thought made her feel moist inside already.

And she would leave work early and hit South Street. Maybe meet someone. That would teach Hermes, off on the west coast.

And gradually, as she showered and dressed, her natural enthusiasm returned full force.

(to be continued)

The Magician is the author of other episodes of the Jack Parsons story (<http://zolatimes.com/jparart/Aparmenu.html>).

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from *[The Laissez Faire City Times](#)*, Vol 3, No 27, July 5, 1999

Jack Parsons &

The Curious Origins of the American Space Program

by The Magician

Part 20: Manuscript Found in an Urn

The girl kept crossing and uncrossing her legs nervously and winding strands of her long blonde hair around her fingers. Like someone he had known in high school. He was surprised she wasn't chewing gum.

David Wilson involuntarily glanced up at her. Mistake. She suddenly froze like a deer in headlights, then crossed her legs once, the knees coming apart just slightly wider than demure. She stared straight at him with set apart blue eyes as though looking through him and beyond.

He cleared his throat. "And you found this manuscript where?"

"In a cave." She smiled brightly as though she knew how crazy it sounded.

"Stuck on a stalagmite?" he asked sarcastically.

"No. In an urn. Like at Qumran."

He nodded knowingly. He had no doubt she had written it.

"Let me guess, psychology major, minor in English. Or vice-versa."

"No. Classical literature." She smiled brightly again as

though to show no offense had been taken at his getting it wrong. "And anthropology."

"Margaret Mead, huh?"

"No. She made all her stuff up. Innocent natives having unencumbered sex. She just wanted to get laid." The girl cocked her head slightly to one side, not smiling now. "In an academic way, of course."

Wilson wondered what getting laid academically meant. He was afraid to ask. Maybe one of his colleagues had put her up to this. A psychology experiment targeted at other psychology professors. He cleared his throat again and pretended to be paging through the manuscript for the first time. But he had already puzzled over it all night.

She had left the manuscript, with a note, in his department mailbox.

"There are some anomalies," he began cautiously. "For instance, here it says that Aleister Crowley thought he was the reincarnation of John Dee. Was that just a mistake the main character makes in his hasty research into Jack Parsons' background? For, of course, Aleister Crowley actually thought he was the reincarnation of Edward Kelley, among others."

She looked at him haughtily. "He most certainly did not. Yes, Crowley *wrote* that. But he was always pulling the leg of his followers, whom he would laugh at when they took him seriously."

Wilson was startled at her confidence. Her tone of authority. He found himself looking over her face, and down the graceful curve of her neck to her breasts which would suddenly strain against the front of her blouse as she spoke passionately. In spite of himself, he was getting turned on. In an academic way, of course.

"John Dee was a scholar, Crowley was a scholar," she

continued. "John Dee was a secret agent, Crowley was a secret agent. John Dee used a scryer Edward Kelley, Crowley used scryers like his wife Rose, Victor Neuberg, and others." She tossed her head. "And much more. Of course Crowley identified with Dee, not with Edward Kelley."

"Well, even if he identified with Dee, it doesn't mean he didn't think he was the reincarnation of Edward Kelley."

"Reincarnation *is* identification." She looked at him as though daring him to argue with her. Definitely one of my colleagues, Wilson thought. Maybe Petrograd had put her up to this. That crazy Russian was always getting defense contracts to do weird things.

"Who did you base the character Zak on?" Wilson asked suddenly.

She didn't appear to notice the implication. "Yeah, what was that all about?" She smiled again now. "I guess people still hear voices in this day and age."

More than you think, Wilson thought to himself. With the Babalon Working Jack Parsons had torn a hole in the fabric of space-time, and something had flown in. Now it seemed an alien current was slowly possessing the entire human race. Whether you thought this was good or bad depended a lot on your point of view.

"This would appear to be a description of my office," Wilson said, glancing around. "You've been here before?"

"I told you I didn't write it," she said coolly.

"But this is supposed to take place in what? In 1987. I've only been here three years. Since 1996."

"I was told you would find it interesting."

"By whom?"

She began to twist hair around her fingers again.

"Oh, by a friend."

Wilson could feel the electric current in his groin. She was—. What was she doing?

"Well, I would like to keep it another few days, if you don't mind." Wilson had already made a copy. But he wanted to make sure she returned, if only to pick up the manuscript.

"Sure," she smiled. "Well, I won't take any more of your time." She stood abruptly, smoothed the front of her skirt, and turned toward the door.

Wilson remained seated. He didn't want his erection to be obvious. You could lose your job for stuff like that these days, he was thinking.

"Who do you think killed Jack Parsons?" he asked.

She turned and looked at him as though he had committed an indiscretion. "In the latter days, a man's enemies shall be those of his own household," she said.

Wilson pondered this. "I didn't know they included the New Testament in classical literature these days."

"They don't. Anyway, I was quoting the Zoroastrian prophet Zaratust. From the *Bahman Yast*. There will be wars and rumors of war, signs in the heavens, earthquakes, plagues. All this was written 600 years before Jesus."

She closed the door quietly behind her.

(to be continued)

The Magician is the author of other episodes of the Jack Parsons story (<http://zolatimes.com/jparart/Aparmenu.html>).

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Jack Parsons &

The Curious Origins of the American Space Program

by The Magician

Part 21: Leaving Mecca

"No, Mohammed *left* Meccah, he didn't *go to* Meccah."

Dean looked at Zak with exasperation. It bugged him that Zak knew so little of the Middle East—maybe some Jewish history and a little about Israel and that was it. The American disease.

"The *Hijra* was when Mohammed left Mecca and went to Medinah, or Yathrib as it was known then. Moslems date their calendar from this event: Year 1 for the Moslems, but 622 A.D. in the West."

"I thought Moslems made a pilgrimage to Mecca," Zak said. To Dean he sounded defensive.

"That's right. It's known as the *hajj*, and is one of the 5 pillars of Islam. Make a pilgrimage to Mecca before you die."

"So why do they do that? I mean, Mohammed left there, right?"

Dean rolled his eyes. "Listen. I'm just telling you what *is*. I don't have to justify any of this. I assume they go to Mecca because that's where Mohammed was from—like Bethlehem for Jesus. Also that's where the mysterious black rock is, the *Kaaba*. It was previously a site of pagan worship, but now has a huge mosque surrounding it."

"A black rock?" Zak's face showed his interest had perked up.

"Yes," Dean replied. "You know, an alien artifact. I wouldn't be surprised if your Council of Nine didn't have something to do with it." He said this in an innocent tone of voice.

"Can't you just accept it as a hypothesis that mankind has been—may have been—in contact with other beings for thousands of years? Really, it explains a lot."

Dean shrugged. "Okay." He wasn't offended by the idea. "And maybe the *Kaaba* is a receiving station. Who knows, maybe even for your Nine."

"Keep in mind that the square root of nine is three," Zak said thoughtfully.

Dean laughed. He rolled off the couch in laughter. He lay on his back on the rug wiping his eyes.

"No, wait. Three—the Christian Trinity, right? Where did that come from? Maybe from a tradition, or just an intuition, about the Nine."

"Right," Dean said, attempting to contain his mirth. He decided to go along: "Hence that fake verse in the New Testament. Where is it?" Dean pulled a book off the shelf and paged a moment. "Here it is: 1 John 5:7. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."

"Fake verse?" Zak asked. "In what sense is it a fake verse? I mean, how it is more fake than any of the others?"

Dean grinned. "Good question. I mean it didn't appear in the original canon which was fixed by the Church in the 4th century. The verse wasn't in any of the Greek manuscripts. Instead it was inserted into the third

edition of Erasmus' Greek New Testament in the 16th century. The verse was taken from the Latin Vulgate. Catholics didn't accept the idea of the Trinity until the Council of Constantinople. When was that? 380 A.D.? But afterward it was embarrassing that there was no mention of the Trinity in the Bible. So some priests got creative and manufactured the evidence."

"Three-in-one. So. The father, the son, and the holy ghost. What the hell is the holy ghost?"

"I don't know. Didn't they make a movie about that with Bill Murray? *Holy Ghost Busters?*"

Dean and Zak were both cracking up now. It was good to relieve the tension of the last several days.

"Anyway," Dean said, "that is the error of the Christians in the Moslem view. There is only one God, Allah. God the Father, if you will. Jesus was a prophet, and worked miracles, but he wasn't God. And neither was this Holy Ghost."

The door to the library opened and a woman entered.

"Oh, hi mother," Dean said. He stood. "This is my friend Zak, the one from America I was telling you about." Dean turned to Zak, and watched Zak turn red and trip over his own tongue.

"I'm very pleased to meet you," Zak finally managed. Dean looked at Zak appraisingly.

"Make yourself welcome in our home," she smiled at Zak. And then to Dean: "Will dinner at nine be suitable?"

"Fine," Dean said. She nodded, smiled again at Zak, and left the room.

"Yes?" Dean inquired, looking at Zak.

"I thought your mother would be, oh, I don't know, a grandmotherly figure, maybe in her 70s. She's— She's beautiful!"

"So she is," Dean said dryly. He knew that for a woman in her 40s, his mother was a strikingly voluptuous figure. But he didn't care to discuss that with Zak. "Why don't I leave you here for a bit while I go see how everyone is. Remember, your room is just down the hall, to the left."

"Okay," Zak said happily.

* * * * *

After Dean had left the room, Zak looked around the library. Many of the books were bound in leather, most of them in Arabic or French. A few were in English. Zak recognized *The Count of Monte Cristo*, by Alexander Dumas, and saw another called *La Bas*, by J. K. Huysman. Even the English books are French, Zak thought to himself. Perhaps the French books are all Arabic.

Zak leaned out a window and looked down the street. He could see the sidewalk café on the corner, and between two buildings the Seine. Here he was in Paris. He had never been out of the U.S. before.

Dean had led the escape from America. For that Zak was grateful—he had been at his wit's end. Zak had returned home, tired from a day of pouring concrete. The dust from the clay had permeated his hair and clothes and dissolved in his sweat, and he was looking forward to a long shower. But first he popped open a can of beer and turned on the T.V. to the news. They were doing an update on the Oral Jerry Swagger story—the one about the dead man who had been found on his lawn. But now the station announced that it had obtained exclusive footage of a cash transaction Swagger made with an unidentified man the day before the dead man showed up on Swagger's lawn.

Zak straightened out of his slouch and stared at the T.V. It was the footage he had Dean shoot of the dinner at L'Orangerie. He sat there stunned, his mind racing. It had been another one of the "Sally Rand" drops. He had carefully wrapped the developed film, placed it into the bottom of a large brown grocery bag, put two mason jars on top of the film package, written "Sally Rand" on the bag, and dropped it at a place in San Marino.

He had been betrayed by Hoova. True, his own image always seemed a little obscured on the film. Dean's cameramen had done their job well. But he could recognize himself easily, which meant someone else could also.

Zak did the only thing he could think of. He called Dean. Dean listened to the story in silence. Finally Dean said, "Do you have a passport, Zak?" The answer, surprisingly enough even to Zak himself, was Yes. He had gotten one on impulse after a long Hoova message that talked of ambassadors to mankind, and embassies, and passports, and other analogies he couldn't remember now.

"We should take a trip. Now, traveling isn't cheap," Dean warned.

No problem, Zak had replied. He had kept his "tithe" from the Swagger money, like Hoova had instructed. He in fact had \$32,000 in cash. Yes, he was very grateful to Dean. Dean had even dropped that bit about him being a Mossad agent, taking Zak's obvious panic and plight at face value.

But, maybe he should thank the Nine also. True, they had betrayed him. But now here he was in Paris. Perhaps it had all served a higher purpose. Zak couldn't escape the feeling, however, of having been *used*. In all his previous missions Zak had performed behind the scene, and had remained behind the scene. But then he had participated in the . . . hit—the transfer of money—on Oral Jerry Swagger, and later had seen

himself in flagrante delecto on local T.V.

The messages via Hoova, messages from the Nine had assured him there was nothing to worry about. Sure, that's what they said. "Once bitten, twice shy," Zak thought to himself.

Zak began to explore the book shelves. The books had been collected mostly by Dean's father. Dean had told Zak his father had been much older than his mother. His father was already a successful engineer of 40 when he married her at 15. There was a dam named after him somewhere in France. Dean's mother had barely attained 20 years of age when her husband had been killed in Caan, only a year after having been appointed the Lebanese Consul in Marseilles.

Zak took *La Bas* from the shelf, and went to his room. He stripped to his shorts, stretched out on the bed and had managed to read a page or two before falling asleep.

It was a troubled sleep. Voices and images haunted him. Accusing fingers, pointing, "That's the man on the tape," whispering as he tried to move to a different spot where he couldn't be seen. A table behind a pillar, a different aisle of the grocery store, around the corner and into the arch of a doorway.

Zak woke up several times, for a few seconds, his mind showing him the actual reality of his safety here in Dean's house in Paris. Eventually Zak relaxed and the images became more pleasant. Trips he had taken with Dean up and down California. In one of them they were stopping in Carmel, and when Zak got to his room at the Inn, there was Dean's mother waiting for him. They kissed, and she said, "Feel my breasts."

Now in Zak's dream Dean's mother was naked on hands and knees, pressing the side of her face against the bed as she looked back at him. "Come on," Zak, she was saying, "slip that big Jewish schlong inside me."

Grabbing the sides of her buttocks, Zak pressed himself firmly into her moist tunnel.

Zak suddenly opened his eyes to the now darkened room. Damn, he thought, why does the mind always conk out just when it's getting exciting?

Zak's erection was painful. Bladder pressure, he thought. He got up and made his way in the darkness down the hall to the bathroom. And when he swung open the door, there was Dean's mother, in slip and panties, slip pulled to the waist, one leg perched on the toilet, a leg naked and exposed to the top of the thigh as she rubbed it with body lotion.

"Oh, hi Zak," she said. "We usually don't lock doors around here. Just a quick knock will do."

"I'm sorry. Excuse me," Zak said in confusion, backing out of the bathroom as he watched her rub cream into the inside of her left thigh. As he closed the door he realized she had been looking at his crotch. In the hallway darkness he quickly felt the front of his shorts and found he was sticking straight out of the opening.

Zak began to wilt as he stumbled back to the bedroom. He crawled under the covers, his face burning, and prayed that dinner time would never arrive.

(to be continued)

The Magician is the author of other episodes of the Jack Parsons story (<http://zolatimes.com/jparart/Aparmenu.html>).

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Jack Parsons &

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by The Magician

Part 22: The Square Root of Minus One

Dean was annoyed with the way Zak was acting around his mother. Zak would spend most of the time staring at her, except if she addressed him he would look down at his plate as he responded. So when Zak threw him an appealing look Dean instead joined in on Fourier's line of humiliation.

Not that Dean wasn't often himself annoyed at Fourier. But his mother was only human, after all, and if Fourier sometimes stayed overnight, well, he preferred it was someone urbane and educated and normally pleasant like Fourier, than, oh, say that young salopard at the butcher shop who was always making eyes at her.

"The most famous equation in mathematics? Um, I would say $\exp(i \pi) = -1$, although there are a few other candidates also," Dean said.

To Dean's satisfaction, Zak was now looking at him furiously.

"Precisely," Fourier said. "So, let's take logs of both sides. We get that the log—we're referring to the natural log, of course—the log of minus one is $\pi i = 3.141592$ etc. multiplied by i , the square root of minus one. Remarkable, isn't it? You take the log of minus one, and you get its square root multiplied by πi . But in any case, that should settle the issue whether negative numbers have logarithms."

"Is there a point to all this?" Zak asked.

Fourier looked at him in genuine surprise. "Why, yes. Aside from the sheer beauty of mathematics, it illustrates that there was something there all along, right in front of one's eyes so to speak, which people chose not to see. First they pretended negative numbers didn't exist. Then they pretended that *imaginary* numbers, ones involving the square root of minus one, didn't exist, or were absurd, or were meaningless. Space debris, as it were. Now, that is exactly how it is today when it comes to the spiritual world, the aliens, the things that go bump in the night, the hyper-dimensional entities that intersect our space-time, cases of coincidence, telepathy, teleportation. We pretend they are not there, or if there, they are meaningless or absurd, or even if they are real, well, so what, they are useless. But any engineer knows how useful i —or j , as electrical engineers call the square root of minus one—really is. The so-called imaginary numbers, or complex numbers (those numbers having both a real and an imaginary part), are some of the most useful in all of mathematics."

Dean saw Zak's face light up at this. "So," Zak said, "to understand the aliens I need to study imaginary numbers? Or complex mathematics?"

"Well, I'm sure it would help," Fourier said, "but the simple point I am making is that spiritual or hyper-dimensional phenomena are imaginary." He paused and looked intently at Zak. "But they are imaginary in the same way imaginary numbers are imaginary. They may be imaginary, but they are very real, in some sense of physical reality. They are built into the fabric of reality, and only a fool denies reality."

Zak looked triumphantly at Dean. "So, what area of complex mathematics would you recommend I start with?" he asked Fourier.

Fourier pondered the question seriously, as he consumed the last of his canard à l'orange. Finally, as though after great difficulty, he said: "Riemann's zeta function."

"Riemann's zeta function?"

"Otherwise known as the P.T. Barnum function," Dean interjected. "There's a prime born every minute." Dean began laughing as his own joke. He stopped when he saw that both Fourier and Zak were looking at him hostilely.

Dean's mother came to the rescue. "We're having creme brulée for dessert. Should I have it served now?"

* * * * *

I drove north. I had no destination. I drove more or less with the same inattention I had driven out into the desert from Los Angeles. Eventually I ended up on 395, still going north.

Later I would look at a map, trying to retrace my path. It wouldn't compute. I had driven out into the desert into nowhere, and had emerged from nowhere back into the ordinary world.

I was a fugitive, I guessed. At least until I sorted out what I wanted to do about that butcher knife ending up in the belly of a man on Oral Jerry Swagger's front lawn. Maybe it wasn't mine, but I doubted that, after all that had happened. It had to be the two ghouls, the two men in black—Little Olive and Big Pasty was the way I thought of them. They had set me up good. First in the park, where I had left my notebook. Oral Jerry Swagger's name prominent. Their attack had led me to buy the butcher knife. Then . . . Then it appears I left it in the hotel room and it ended up stuck in an OJS employee on Swagger's lawn in Pasadena. Next there would undoubtedly show up a link back to the Pasadena Hilton. Then my notebook would mysteriously surface.

Then . . .

I drove. Was this the way it had happened to Jack Parsons? He was ready for a trip, a move to Mexico, to the 17th-century castle the Mexican government was providing him—and then he got blown up in the garage apartment he used as a laboratory while he was packing his car for the trip. I was sure it was someone connected to the U.S. government, trying to bury Parsons' technology—to maintain the military monopoly.

But, who knows? Before this Jack, with his magical workings, had opened a crack and something had flown in. Maybe Little Oliver and Big Pasty flew in from that direction also. I glanced at the other end of the seat. The Louisville slugger was still with me. There are a lot of things you can do with a baseball bat. Even play baseball.

Mt. Whitney loomed to my left, and I reached the turnoff to drive to the base of the mountain. I was tempted, but continued on. One year three other fools and I had tried to climb Mt. Whitney in the winter time, while it was covered with snow. The first night we camped at 8000 feet. One of the guys stretched out his legs and stuck his ice-covered boots right by the fire, to melt the ice off them. After a time, someone smelled something burning. He had burned half-way through the rubber sole of one boot, without even feeling the heat.

The next day we had continued on up the mountain. I was well ahead of the others when we decided to turn back, because the guy's foot was freezing—the guy with half a sole. In attempting to catch up with those below, I noticed a nicely sloped, snow-filled, but shallow ravine, and hopped in and went sliding down at a nice pace on my rear end. Then abruptly I had to brake my slide, because there was a sudden sharp drop-off of about 15 feet, right in front of me. The ravine had by this time deepened considerably, and I fumbled around trying to figure out how to climb out of it. The snow kept getting deeper at the edge of the ravine, and I was in snow up to my chest when it suddenly all went whoosh, and I fell

into a crevice. I had managed to wedge myself at the top, using my upper arms, with my feet dangling. But there was no hand or foothold, because everything was covered with ice. And when I finally got out of the crevice, I was still faced with the original problem.

I jumped down 15 feet into a point beside where I saw a rock peeking out of the snow below, and survived without hurting myself.

Being a fugitive wasn't so bad, I decided, since by all rights I should have been dead years ago. When the four of us got off Mt. Whitney that day, we drove to Death Valley and had a wiener roast. We were looking for highs and lows, all in the same trip.

I drove on.

(to be continued)

The Magician is the author of other episodes of the Jack Parsons story (<http://zolatimes.com/jparart/Aparmenu.html>).

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