

SCIENTOLOGY

SPECTRUM

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# The odd beginning of Ron Hubbard's career

**JOHN WHITESIDE** Parsons, a brilliant rocket fuel scientist, joined the American branch of Crowley's cult in 1939. He struck up earnest correspondence with "The Beast 666," as Crowley was known by his followers, and soon became his outstanding protégé in the United States. By January, 1946 Parsons was impatient to break new frontiers in the occult world. He decided to take the spirit of Babalon, the "whore of Babylon," and invest it in a human being.

But to carry out this intricate mission Parsons needed a female sexual partner to create his child in the astral (spiritual) world. If this part of the fixture went successfully Parsons would be able to call down the spiritual baby and direct it to a human womb. When born, this child would incarnate the forces of Babalon. During his magical preparations for this incarnation Parsons found himself overwhelmed with assistance from a young novice named Ron Hubbard.

Parsons wrote to Crowley at the beginning of 1946, "He (Hubbard) is a gentleman, red hair, green eyes, honest and intelligent and we have become great friends. Although he has no formal training in magic he has an extraordinary amount of experience and understanding in the field. Ron appears to have some sort of highly developed astral vision. He describes his angel as a beautiful winged woman with red hair whom he calls the Empress and who has guided him through his life and saved him many times." He concluded almost ecstatically, "He is in complete accord with our own principles. I have found a staunch companion and comrade in Ron."

But within two months the bonds of friendship were under some strain: Ron claimed Parsons' girl-friend, Betty. With admirable restraint Parsons wrote to Crowley, "She has transferred her sexual affection to Ron. I cared for her rather deeply but I have no desire to control her emotions." As if to cement their loyalties Parsons, Hubbard and Betty decided to pool their finances and form a business partnership.



In 1946 Aleister Crowley (left), the sorcerer and mystic whose dabbings in black magic earned him the title The Wickedest Man in the World, found a new disciple and welcomed him to one of his occult communities in California. The extraordinary activities of this new and enthusiastic disciple are described in a vast collection of papers owned by a former admirer of Crowley, which we have examined. The man in question is Lafayette Ron Hubbard (right), head of the now notorious Church of Scientology.



Meanwhile preparations for the mystical mission were well under way. From January 4 to 15, 1946, Parsons and Hubbard engaged in a nightly ritual of incantation, talisman-waving and other black magic faithfully described in Parsons' diary as Conjunction of Air, Invocation of Wand and Consecration of Air Dagger. With a Prokofiev violin concerto blaring away the two of them pleaded with the spirits for "an elemental mate" — a girl willing to go through sexual rites to incarnate Babalon in the spirit world.

Parsons mentions that windstorms occurred on a couple of nights and one night the power supply failed. But nothing seriously responsive until January 14, when Ron was struck on the right shoulder and had a candle knocked out of his hand. "He called me," Parsons wrote, "and we observed a brownish yellow light about seven feet high. I brandished a magical sword and it disappeared. Ron's right arm was paralysed for the rest of the night."

The following night was even more portentous. Hubbard apparently saw a vision of one of Parsons' enemies. Parsons wrote, "He attacked the figure and pinned it to the door with four throwing knives with which

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he is expert." For four days Parsons and Hubbard, were in a state of tension. Then, on January 18, Parsons turned to Ron and said, "It is done." He added, "I returned home and found a young woman answering the requirements waiting for me."

The incarnation ritual set out in Parsons' manuscript, *The Book of Babalon*, is difficult reading for the unconfirmed spiritualist. Broadly interpreted, Parsons and Hubbard constructed an altar and Hubbard acted as high priest during a series of ceremonies in which Parsons and the girl shared sex. The owner of the documents, who is an expert on Crowley's magic, says that Parsons at this stage was completely under Hubbard's domination. How else can one explain Hubbard's role as High priest in the rites after only a few weeks in the trade?

For the first of the birth ceremonies which began on March 1 Hubbard wore white and carried a lamp while Parsons



PARSONS, "the AntiChrist"

was cloaked in a black, hooded garment carrying a cup and dagger. At Hubbard's suggestion they played Rachmaninoff's *Isle of the Dead* as background music.

Parsons' account of the start of the birth ritual is as follows: "The Scribe (Hubbard) said, 'The year of Babalon is 4063. She is the flame of life, power of darkness, she destroys with a glance, she may take thy soul. She feeds upon the death of men. Beautiful—horrible.' The scribe, now pale and sweating, rested awhile, then continued." There are two possible reasons why Hubbard showed anxiety at this stage of the ceremony, the owner of the papers says. He was either deeply moved by the spiritual depth of the ceremony or he couldn't think what to say next.

Hubbard further instructed Parsons: "Display thyself to our lady; dedicate thy organs to her; dedicate thy heart to her; display thy mind to her; dedicate thy soul to her, for she shall absorb thee. Retire from human contact until noon tomorrow. Speak not of this ritual. Discuss nothing of it. Consult no book but thine own

mind. Thou art a god. Behave at this altar as one god before another."

On the third day the ritual began four hours before dawn. Ron tells his companion, "Lay out a white sheet. Place upon it blood of birth. Envision her approaching thee. Think upon the lewd, lascivious things thou couldn't do. All is good to Babalon. All. Preserve the material basis. The lust is hers, the passion yours. Consider thou the Beast raping." These invocations along with other passages in the ritual indicates that Parsons had collected specimens of his own sperm and the girl's menstrual fluid.

The climax of the ceremony occurred the following day with Ron at the altar working his two subjects into a sexual frenzy. Over Rachmaninoff he intoned such gems as:

*Her mouth is red and her breasts are fair and her loins are full of fire,  
And her lust is strong as a man is strong in the heat of her desire.*

An exalted Parsons wrote the next day, "Babalon is incarnate upon the earth today awaiting the proper hour of her manifestation. And in that day my work will be accomplished and I shall be blown away upon the breath of the father even as it is prophesied." (In fact, Parsons was "blown away" in a rocket fuel explosion at his experimental laboratory in Pasadena in 1952.)

Unable to contain his joy, Parsons decided to tell Crowley what had happened. On March 6 he wrote, "I can hardly tell you or decide how much to write. I am under command of extreme secrecy. I have had the most important, devastating experience of my life." Crowley was dumbfounded by the news of the incarnation ceremony. He wrote back, "You have me completely puzzled by your remarks. I thought I had the most morbid imagination but it seems I have not. I cannot form the slightest idea what you can possibly mean."

With a distinct note of concern he dashed off a letter on the same day to the head of his American cult saying, "Apparently Parsons or Hubbard or somebody is producing a Moonchild. I get fairly frantic when I contemplate the idiocy of these louts." (This acid rebuke comes from a man whose activities were once summed up by a judge like this: "I have never heard such dreadful, horrible, blasphemous and abominable stuff as that which has been produced by the man who describes himself as the greatest living poet.")

By May that same year Crowley was not only concerned about Parsons's spiritual well-being. There was a small matter of certain moneys. When the trio formed their business enterprise, Parsons is believed to have put in 17,000 dollars, Hubbard about 1,000 dollars and Betty nothing. Using about 10,000 dollars of the money

Hubbard and his newly acquired girl friend, Betty, bought a yacht. A report to the head of the American branch by another cult member says, "Ron and Betty have their boat at Miami, Florida, and are living the life of Riley, while Brother Joe (Parsons) is living at the bottom and I mean the bottom."

In a more sinister way a report added, "Let us consider this matter of the magical child which Jack Parsons is supposed to turn loose on the world in nine months (now seven). Ron the Seer, was the guy who laid down the main ideas, technique (sic), etc., of said operation."

On reading Parsons's account of the ceremony and the report from branch headquarters in America, Crowley cabled his office on May 22: "Suspect R playing confidence trick—Jack Parsons weak fool—obvious victim prowling swindlers." A letter a few days later he said "It seems to me on the information of our brethren in California that Parsons has given an illumination in which he lost all his personal independence. From our brother's account he has given away both his goods and his money. Apparently it is the ordinary confidence trick."

A much-chastened Parsons wrote to Crowley on July 1: "Here I am in Miami pursuing the children of my folly. I have them well tied up. They cannot move without going to jail. However, I am afraid that most of the money has already been spent. I will be lucky to salvage 3,000 to 5,000 dollars." Just how Parsons managed to capture the errant lovers is in keeping with the other extraordinary chapters of this story. "Hubbard attempted to escape me," Parsons wrote, "by sailing at 5 p.m. and performed a full invocation to Bartzabel within the circle at 8 p.m. (a curse). At the same time, however, his ship was struck by a sudden squall off the coast which ripped off his sails and forced him back to port where I took the boat in custody."

Parsons recovered financially and possibly as a backlash of his experience with Hubbard he took the Oath of the Anti-Christ in 1948 and changed his name to Belarion Armitluss A Dajjal AntiChrist. In his Scientology publications Hubbard says of the period, "Crippled and blinded at the end of the war I resumed studies of philosophy and by my discoveries recovered so fully that I was reclassified in 1949 for full combat duty."

Hubbard claims that more than two dozen thinkers, prophets and psychologists influenced Scientology (which he launched in 1951); everyone from Plato, Jesus of Nazareth to Sigmund Freud whom he says he studied under in Vienna. The record can now be righted with the inclusion of Aleister Crowley, the Beast 666.

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