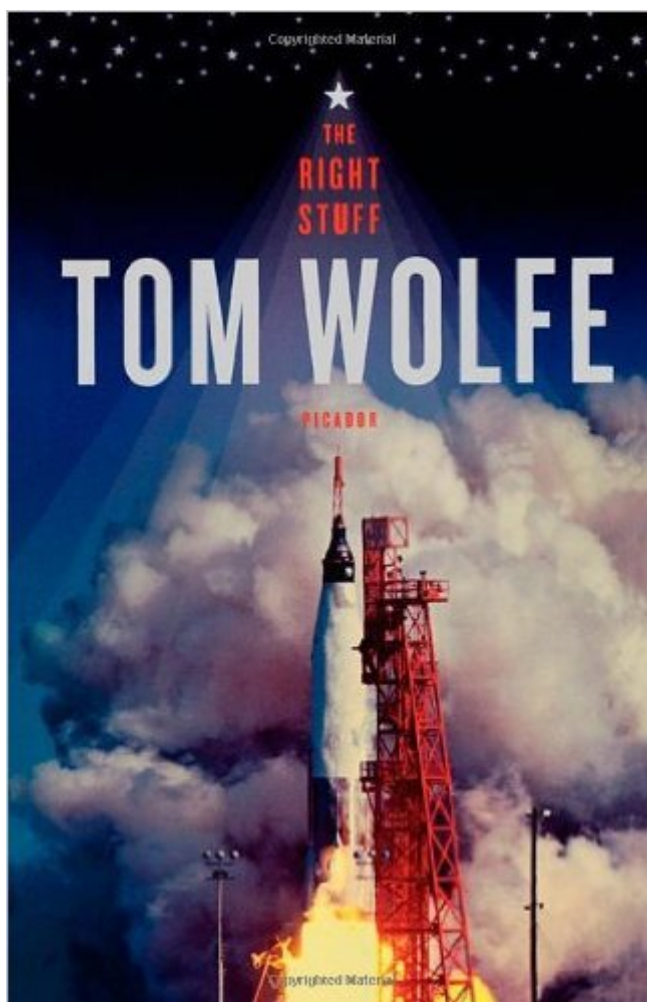


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# The Right Stuff



## Synopsis

From "America's nerviest journalist" (Newsweek)--a breath-taking epic, a magnificent adventure story, and an investigation into the true heroism and courage of the first Americans to conquer space. "Tom Wolfe at his very best" (The New York Times Book Review) Millions of words have poured forth about man's trip to the moon, but until now few people have had a sense of the most engrossing side of the adventure; namely, what went on in the minds of the astronauts themselves - in space, on the moon, and even during certain odysseys on earth. It is this, the inner life of the astronauts, that Tom Wolfe describes with his almost uncanny empathetic powers, that made *The Right Stuff* a classic.

## Book Information

Paperback: 352 pages

Publisher: Picador; 2 edition (March 4, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0312427565

ISBN-13: 978-0312427566

Product Dimensions: 6.8 x 1 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars Â See all reviews Â (292 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

In the early '80s, I was to graduate from school and got interested in flying for the US Navy. My mother sent a copy of T. Wolfe's book hoping to sway my dangerous intent and take a 'real' job. WRONG. About 9 months later I was soloing over Corpus Christi Bay and on my way to flying Navy jets. Wolfe has written an epic that spans from the early days of flight test through the beginning of the US manned space program. It will increase the heart rate of aviators, aviation buffs and armchair pilots/astronauts. I highly recommend that anyone remotely interested in aviation/space read this book. While it may not be accurate to the smallest detail, the overall scope and feel for an era gone by can never be or has ever been captured in the history books. Regarding Gus Grissom, new facts are coming to light that will clear his reputation. Wolfe does hammer Gus in the book

about what was known at the time Wolfe wrote "The Right Stuff". However, all the research and reading that I have done, Gus was probably the smartest engineer and best test pilot of the M-7 astronauts. He had a reputation of being a real nuts and bolts engineer and a hard nose pilot. He could handle any situation while flying experimental aircraft or on the ground discussing craft/engine design with NASA's engineers. If any one has ever seen the old NASA films of the Apollo program, when Gus is doing the radio tests on that fateful day, he really gives the engineers hell from the capsule owing to poor communication on the radios "Jesus Christ, we can't talk between three building, how the hell are we going to talk on the moon." Classic Gus. Ironically, when Apollo One caught fire moments later, the hatch was redesigned not to repeat the same incident that happened to Gus in Liberty Bell 7 - and Gus, Chaffee and White paid the ultimate price. Read this book. It is one of the best books I have ever read and was a real inspiration during my Navy days and beyond. Bondo

I've owned "The Right Stuff" for over thirty years in print form. I downloaded the Kindle version from to take with me on business trips. To my disgust, the Kindle edition is abysmal - clearly, or whoever came up with it ran the print edition through a character-recognition software program and utterly failed to copy-edit it afterwards. The number of errors is alarming, and it is only because I've read the print version so many times that I was able to recognize what some of the errors meant in the text. It's a shame, because this book is a fine, fine book and one of my all-time favorites. Shame on or the publisher or both for charging \$10.00 for a flawed, poorly-edited copy.

Great book, completely flubbed by. Is it so hard to run a spell check on a Kindle manuscript before publishing it? This book is filled with ridiculous OCR screwups: letters cl being turned into a nonsensical d, for instance. And there are a lot of them. needs to fix this book and send us all an updated version that doesn't hurt our eyes or our brains.

First, ignore the first rating in the Kindle review. While the Kindle version may well have had problems when first published on Kindle, they have been corrected. That review kept me from reading the Kindle edition of this book for a couple of years. Finally, I decided to try it, and found no mistakes. So, buy it and read it. You will be very happy that you did! I first read this book 30+ years ago and loved it then. Recently, I read *The Astronauts Wives Club*, another excellent book. This book was the first behind the scenes book to really get the feeling of the brave men (no women astronauts in the Mercury Program), and the test pilots who flew the supersonic jets before them.

Prior to this, we basically got the sanitized "official" stories of a group of Boy Scouts. I've read that the Astronauts loved Tom Wolfe's book, but hated the movie. Well, the book is great. I'd also read the Astronauts Wives Club to see the entire story from the wives' point of view.

Tom Wolfe gives a brilliantly entertaining and inspirational book about one of the most colorful chapters in recent American history -- the years from the first supersonic piloted test flight up to the early Sixties, when astronauts completed the beginning of America's space program. Wolfe writes about "the right stuff--" a blend of correct judgment, coolness, and the ability to get the job done no matter what the danger. Wolfe rarely depends on technical stuff, so the book will appeal to those who know or care little about aviation or space, and there's little to deter the squeamish, either. The author shows the period's bright side (the accomplishments in spite of the danger, the dopamine-flowing release after a job well-done, the intense exhilaration of it all) , and the dark side (the fears of the families, the tragic deaths from minor lapses in luck or judgment, the tedious egomania of many involved in the programs). This book epitomizes the bright and dark side of Wolfe's school of writing, too. Above all, Wolfe can be as riveting and as entertaining as you'll find -- "truth can be funnier than fiction." I have heard how Wolfe caught the essence of what someone wanted to say even better than the one who said it, and he sure puts you into the thick of the action. The author gives a legitimate and interesting perspective. Nevertheless, this style plays heavily on your emotions, with all the problems that can involve, and the book is not terribly objective -- a purely entertaining incident can assume more importance than it should. Since Wolfe's storytelling style can blur the distinction between fact and conjecture, it "stretches the envelope" of truth-telling, so if another storyteller doesn't have basic integrity (and many authors and journalists regrettably do not), this style of writing can mislead or deceive. Character development and depth are questionable; those who have "the right stuff" in the face of danger are portrayed as almost superhuman, and those who don't are made into buffoons (no matter how significant their contributions to the mission). This "tyranny of the cool" can get a bit annoying after a while. In short, I think Wolfe's book gives a grand idea of the spirit of the times, and of life's entertainment value, but it is rightly considered a novel rather than history. I easily gave it five stars because it is SUCH an inspirational and delightful read, but I would approach it with a bit of light-hearted skepticism.

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