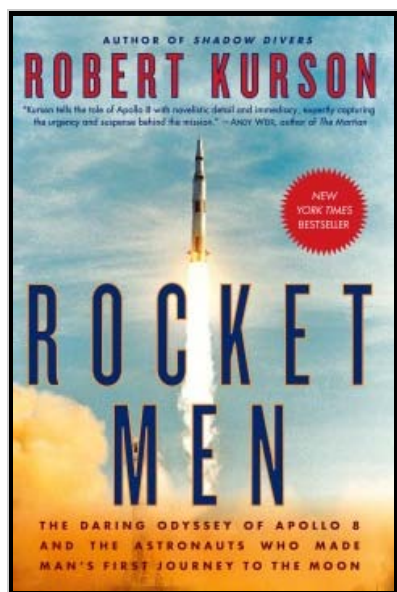


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Rocket Men

The Daring Odyssey of Apollo 8 and the Astronauts Who Made Man's First Journey to the Moon

by Robert Kurson

Price: **\$28.00**(Hardcover)
Published: April 03, 2018

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From the Publisher: The riveting inside story of three heroic astronauts who took on the challenge of mankind's historic first mission to the Moon, from the New York Times bestselling author of *Shadow Divers*. By August 1968, the American space program was in danger of failing in its two most important objectives: to land a man on the Moon by President Kennedy's end-of-decade deadline, and to triumph over the Soviets in space. With its back against the wall, NASA made an almost unimaginable leap: It would scrap its usual methodical approach and risk everything on a sudden launch. With just four months to prepare—a fraction of the normal time required to plan a space mission—the agency committed to sending the first men in history to the Moon. And it would all happen at Christmas. In a year of historic violence and discord—the Tet Offensive, the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr., and Robert Kennedy, the riots at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago—the Apollo 8 mission would be the boldest, riskiest test of America's greatness under pressure. In this gripping insider account, Robert Kurson puts the focus on the three astronauts and their families: the commander, Frank Borman, a conflicted man on his final mission; idealistic Jim Lovell, who'd dreamed since boyhood of riding a rocket to the Moon; and Bill Anders, a young nuclear engineer and hotshot fighter pilot making his first space flight. Drawn from hundreds of hours of one-on-one interviews with the astronauts, their loved ones, NASA personnel, and myriad experts, and filled with vivid and unforgettable detail, *Rocket Men* is the definitive account of one of America's finest hours that reads like a real-life thriller. In these pages, Kurson reveals the epic dangers involved, and the singular bravery it took, for mankind to leave Earth for the first time—and arrive at a new world. Advance praise for *Rocket Men* "In 1968 we sent men to the Moon. They didn't leave boot prints, but it was the first time humans ever left Earth for another destination. That mission was Apollo 8. And *Rocket Men*, under Robert Kurson's compelling narrative, is that under-told story."—Neil deGrasse Tyson "Kurson takes us on mankind's first trip to the Moon in 1968, another time when it seemed America was tearing itself apart. But on Christmas Eve, we raised our eyes skyward and were inspired by the bravery and eloquence of the three Apollo 8 astronauts as they orbited the Moon and reminded us of our common humanity."—Chesley "Sully" Sullenberger

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About The Author

Robert Kurson
Robert Kurson earned a bachelor's degree in philosophy from the University of Wisconsin and a law degree from Harvard Law School. His award-winning stories have appeared in *The New York Times Magazine*, *Rolling Stone*, and *Esquire*, where he was a contributing editor. He is the author of three *New York Times* bestsellers: *Shadow Divers*, the 2005 American Booksellers Association's nonfiction Book Sense Book of the Year; *Crashing Through*, based on Kurson's 2006 National Magazine Award-winning profile in *Esquire* of the blind speed skier, CIA analyst, and entrepreneur Mike May; and *Pirate Hunters*. His latest book, *Rocket Men*, tells the story of the historic Apollo 8 mission to the Moon. He lives in Chicago.

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What We Say

Best-selling author Robert Kurson spotlights the Apollo 8 moon mission just in time for the event's 50th anniversary this December. It competes with a best-seller released last year about the same feat of orbiting the moon (not to mention the Tom Hanks miniseries *From The Earth To The Moon* devoting a section to it). But the story is so gripping it bears repeating. Kurson sets the stakes nicely: 1968 was a miserable year for the US and the world but those focused on the space race saw the Soviets pulling ahead once and for all. They were poised to orbit the moon with humans on board and stake a claim to unparalleled supremacy in space. That's when NASA recklessly rolled the dice, threw aside its customary desire to take every venture step by careful step and send Apollo 8 to the moon. Newspaper editorials said taking unnecessary risks like this was simply uncalled for. Top officials at NASA hedged their bets. Everyone knew the slightest error might doom the mission or -- worse case scenario -- leave the astronauts lost in space or forever orbiting the moon, ruining Christmas not just for 1968 but forever. Instead, it proved a peerless success, though every bump and hurdle is ably described for the layperson to get awfully worked up over. Kurson sketches in the three astronauts and their wives deftly: Frank Borman, Jim Lovell and Bill Anders. This is easily absorbed by those who know Apollo 11 and saw the movie "Apollo 13" and wonder if there are other stories to tell. Indeed there are. Kurson does a little too much scene-setting with the 1968 details and hammers home the one or two defining personality traits of the astronauts over and over. Plus, while every technical challenge and stage of the flight is fraught with danger, it does begin to feel as if he has raised the stakes as high as possible -- now THIS is the crucial moment -- once too often. Nonetheless, it's a solid rendition of an inherently absorbing adventure. And what a happy time, a time when countries competed ruthlessly by exploring our solar system and expanding human knowledge, rather than jockeying for power here on earth. Sure, the militarization of space always loomed, but ultimately the not-so-friendly rivalry between the US and the USSR remained an ideal way to compare ideologies and cultures. -- Michael Giltz

What Others Say

Advance praise for *Rocket Men*

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"*Rocket Men* is a timely and thrilling reminder of a heroic American achievement—three dashing astronauts and the first rendezvous with the Moon. It has it all—suspense, drama, risk, and loving families. We could use those days again."—Tom Brokaw

"This is the story of the most consequential and daring voyage since those in the era of Columbus, the Apollo 8 mission to the Moon. The tale is told with the care and clarity, and the heart-banging drama, that Robert Kurson's legion of readers have come to expect from him."—Scott Turow

"As a Rocket Woman myself, I know very well the story of Apollo 8, and yet I couldn't put this book down. I was transported—along with NASA, the public, and the crew and their families—on this first-of-its-kind journey. Kurson presents not only the challenges, risks, ambition, and success of Apollo 8, but a story of human spirit. As we approach the fiftieth anniversary of Apollo 8, their incredible journey and the stunning memory of Earthrise can set us on the trajectory for an awe-inspired future."—Nicole Stott, NASA ISS and space shuttle astronaut

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