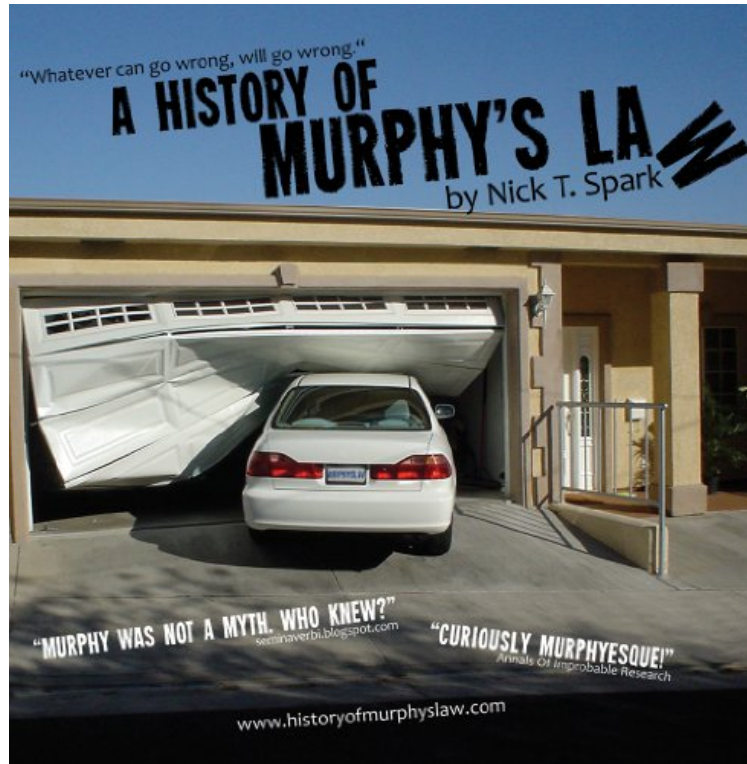


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## A History of Murphy's Law

Nick T. Spark

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**Nick T. Spark : A History of Murphy's Law** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A History of Murphy's Law:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The Quest for The Limits of Human EnduranceBy C LBack in the 70s I played rugby with the son of Eli Beeding. Never heard of him? He holds the world record for G forces. He survived a rocket sled test that subjected him to a deceleration force of 83 times the force of gravity. It was a mistake, an error that shouldn't have happened and Beeding was lucky he lived through it. Nick Spark delves deeply into mistakes made in the early era of rocket sledding that led to the now ubiquitously quoted Murphy's Law: "Whatever can go wrong, will go wrong."Spark deftly mixes his search for the origins of Murphy's Law with the backdrop of a bunch of crazy military guys hell bent on testing the limits of human endurance. This is a fascinating trek through the annals and antics of those who had the "right stuff" before the phrase was later coined to describe the early astronauts of the Mercury Program. Spark works tirelessly to uncover the best guess of the origins of Murphy's Law, leaving the reader in the end to make up his/her own mind after sifting through all the evidence.This is an excellent quick read and will leave you wanting to know more about these early pioneers of rocket powered experiments. The book is chock full of great vintage photos of the time. Well written and entertaining, I highly recommend it.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. This is Right StuffBy JCCThis little book tells a very big story concerning engineering in general, human memory, and "who writes the history" using Murphy's Law as the keystone, and easily coasts in to a 5 star rating. It's a quick and fun read, particularly for those in any technical engineering field, not to mention anyone

who has read and enjoyed *The Right Stuff*. Not only is it more good background for the adventures of Gen. Chuck Yeager and his compadres at the time, but it is a fascinating story of a selfless and heroic M.D., John Paul Stapp, who helped tremendously to make it all possible. It is also a great reminder of the fact that without teamwork and a close adherence to Murphy's Law, an awful lot of us would not be where we are today. My only (small) quibble was one small paragraph of his Afterword in which he says that "the possibility does exist that the whole story really is bunk.", based on the possibility that the Law may have existed in written form before the origin given here. Although it may very well have existed prior to the happenings at Edwards Air Force Base, Mr. Sparks' conclusion that it "would mean that the various overlapping accounts as told by" those involved, including the West Point Engineer, Edward Aloysius Murphy himself, are "fiction" is not necessarily accurate. The "fiction" would be that none of this ever happened. What it really means is that all these men had a great time developing "Laws" in order to assist themselves in staying humorously and actively involved using their own morale building exercise on a long, arduous and dangerous project located in the harsh and isolated Mojave Desert in 1950's America, and that Murphy was around to demonstrate a law as old as human toolmakers... and lucky enough to have it named for him.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Be enlightened and moved. By Per Vagn-Hansen. *Sine ira et studio* - without anger or fondness - is often used to remind historians and reporters not to get carried away by emotion when writing. Nick Sparks book is a very good example of the credibility an author can earn himself by following this latin term coined by the roman historian Tacitus. I am convinced that I have used Murphy's law for years without really understanding its meaning and historical emergence. I now believe that is it correct to say that Murphy's law is essentially an optimistic statement - a way to gain awareness and focus our lives in order to prevent things from going wrong (p. 51) - and not a laconic desillusioned statement wich reflects that humans tend to remember the bad over the good. I am moved and enlightened, and I am going to read it again and use it for reference!

Murphy's Law is one of the most well-recognized statements of philosophy known to man, but who was Murphy and what is the real meaning of his Law? This is the premise of this surprising and celebrated work of non-fiction. Tipped off by his next door neighbor that Murphy may have actually worked at Edwards Air Force Base in the 1950s, and that the Law may have come into being after a rocket sled experiment went awry, author Nick T. Spark undertakes a Quixotic quest to learn the truth. His attempts to pin down the mysterious origins of The Law and to answer the eternal question, Who was Murphy and what is the true meaning of Murphy's Law? are part Rashomon part Right Stuff and totally amusing, funny and revelatory. Read it, and find out why everything you ever thought you knew about Murphy's Law -- is wrong. This enhanced edition features a new foreword by Marc Abrahams, editor of the *Annals of Improbable Research* the famed organization which (based on Spark's research) awarded the originators of Murphy's Law an Ig Nobel prize. It also includes a lengthy after-word with surprising new revelations about the what ifs surrounding one of the world's most famous aphorisms -- and the continuing dispute over who said what and when.

Read it and you'll appreciate the absurdity of any attempt to learn the real details of any historical incident. Curiously Murphyesque! -- *Annals of Improbable Research*, January 2006

About the Author: An award-winning writer and documentary filmmaker with a keen interest in aviation history, Nick T. Spark holds an M.F.A. in film production from the University of Southern California. He is a frequent contributor to history magazines including *Wings*, *Airpower*, *Naval History*, and the *Journal of the American Aviation Historical Society* and has appeared on PBS' *History Detectives*, National Public Radio and Japan's NHK. He directed the documentary film *Regulus: The First Nuclear Missile Submarines* and produced and wrote the Emmy-award winning documentary *The Legend of Pancho Barnes and the Happy Bottom Riding Club*. He lives in Los Angeles.