

Noiseless, bright object

RN

# 8 cops tell of seeing UFO

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Reports of unidentified flying objects rarely arouse law enforcement officers in the Detroit area — they've heard that story before from excited citizens and nothing unusual ever showed up.

But shortly after 9 o'clock last night, it was some law enforcement officers themselves — eight sheriff's deputies — who saw something bright and startling in the sky, in the area of western Wayne County and eastern Washtenaw County.

"We've never had anything like this," said Deputy Robert Barackman, veteran dispatcher for the Wayne County Road Patrol. "Some of the deputies said it was revolving and one said it looked like a merry-go-round in the sky.

"We've never had a sighting this good — eight officers telling the same story."

**THE STORY WAS** of a large, white stationary object in the sky on a cloudy night, with no noise and no advertisements on the object such as might be found on a promotional balloon or helicopter, reported Barackman.

Early this morning, Howard Wright called The News and claimed that it was an advertising sign on the bottom of his airplane that people saw.

Wright — who owns the Aero Ad firm at Detroit City Airport — said the sign is 45 feet long, from wingtip to wingtip on the bottom of his aircraft.

Wright said he was flying in the area where UFOs were reported. He added that high winds slowed his plane to five knots, accounting for the stationary light reports.

"You're not going to believe this, but it just took off at a high rate of speed into the clouds and disappeared," Deputy Charles Wiggins, an eight-year veteran, told Barackman.

**FOR EIGHT YEARS**, Barackman has manned the telephone on the night shift at the Road Patrol office in Westland. It's his job to dispatch patrol cars by telephone to answer citizen complaints.

"We got nine citizen calls on this," Barackman said. "After the seventh call, I sent a car to the area of Ann Arbor Road and Sheldon in Plymouth Township, where the calls were coming from."

The deputy got there and radioed back, "I don't see anything."

Barackman was about to assume that nothing unusual was going on when Wiggins radioed in from a car at Northville Road and Six Mile.

"I can see a large, white stationary object in the sky in the northwest," Wiggins reported.

The first deputy then radioed Barackman back. "I see something up there," he said. His partner in the car saw it, too.

Then Wiggins radioed in his story of how the object took off and disappeared.

**MEANWHILE**, the Washtenaw County sheriff's office was busy with the same type of reports.

"Five of our deputies radioed in," said George McAllister, the deputy on duty at the desk. "It was a real bright object and there was no noise like an airplane. It seemed to be west of Ypsilanti, moving from the east to northeast."

Washtenaw County, however, got no citizen reports on the sighting.

"That's the strangest thing," said McAllister.

"We're usually bombarded with calls when something like this pops up."

Barackman said that at his request the operations tower at Detroit Metropolitan Airport tried to get a radar fix on the object. But it couldn't, "perhaps because of the terrain."

Contributing to this story was Staff Writer Chris Singer.