

The Sun-TV guide

A mid-air mystery

UFOs — now there's a topic to tickle the imagination.

Galactic tales of flying saucers inhabited by little green critters have been the source of both intrigue and ridicule.

Believers argue it's ludicrous to suggest earthlings are the only life form in the universe to have discovered the art of space travel.

But cynics claim UFO sightings seem to be made by hillbillies in the middle of nowhere as opposed to university professors on the campus of Cambridge.

Whatever your view, there is the mysterious matter of the 1978 disappearance of light air-



● Frederick Valentich
craft pilot Frederick Valentich over Bass Strait.

His mid-air claims that a UFO had harassed him prompted such headlines as "Kidnapped by alien beings".

More than a decade

later, there is no trace of Valentich or his plane.

This puzzling story is recreated in a fascinating documentary called *Something Shining* on SBS tonight at 7.30 pm.

What started as a seemingly simple joy-flight from Moorabbin to King Island turned into a baffling case about which everyone is quick to theorise.

The fact the Transport Department refused to release the tape of Valentich's frantic last radio messages adds to the drama.

But it has been revealed he said of the alleged hovering UFO: "It seems to me he is playing some sort of game,

"He is flying over me, two or three times, at speeds I couldn't identify.

"What I'm doing right now is orbiting and the thing is just orbiting on top of me ... it's just vanished."

Interviews with air officials and Valentich's family don't shed light on what happened on the night of October 21, 1978.

"I don't know what he saw, but whatever he said he saw, he saw," one said.

Is Valentich's disappearance a con job or did aliens kidnap him?

ABC newsreader James Dibble sums up the special:

"I wonder if he had been taken by a UFO and



had come back — would anyone believe him?"