

SHAPES IN THE SKY by CIVILIAN SAUCER INTELLIGENCE

# FANTASTIC UNIVERSE

SCIENCE FICTION

ICD

NOV.  
35c



**WHAT  
PILOTS  
A UFO?**

by **IVAN T. SANDERSON**

**MEET THE EXTRATERRESTRIAL** by **ISABEL DAVIS**

**STORIES** by **F. B. BRYNING · BERTRAM CHANDLER · ROBERT F. YOUNG**

shapes  
in  
the  
sky

by CIVILIAN SAUCER  
INTELLIGENCE

What is the explanation for strange droning sounds made by many UFOs, specially when seen at closer range?

IN OUR LAST article (*Fantastic Universe*, September), we presented a speculative case for the proposition that some UFOs may be a kind of animal life. However, many UFOs give the impression of being mechanical constructions, rather than living beings. We now propose to exhibit some examples of *noisy* UFOs, and these mostly seem to fall into the "mechanical" class.

Many writers on the subject have pointed out that a notable peculiarity of UFO phenomena is the *silence* of the objects' passage through the sky. It is possible to over-stress this: in many cases, as when the object is at a great distance or is seen from the inside of a noisy airplane, the observer could hardly hear any sounds even if they existed. Also, there is nothing extraordinary about a UFOs silence if it is not traveling at a very high speed. But there are many cases in which this silence really is extraordinary. Unlike a bullet, a meteorite, or anything else that we know of, a flying saucer can dart at supersonic velocity

---

*The Research Section of Civilian Saucer Intelligence now discusses acoustic phenomena, "sounds in the sky", in their fifth column on UFO sightings and reports, written specially for this magazine. CSI publishes a newsletter and has an extensive file of material on the subject.*

---

through our atmosphere "like a ghost," without provoking the scream of violently displaced air, as it "ought" to. No one understands how this apparent violation of physical laws is brought about, though there have been a number of attempts to explain it; Lt. Plantier, for example, tries to show that a "propulsion field" would produce the observed effect. (*La Propulsion des Soucoupes Volantes*, Editions Mame, Paris, 1955.) Even in the rare cases where sounds are heard to issue from an observed object, they are seldom aero-dynamic noises—as a rule, they might be described as "engine" sounds.

Of course this abnormal soundlessness at high speed could be accounted for if what is seen is not really a material body at all, but only a moving spot of light, like that from a searchlight, which would naturally not disturb any air in its passage. Donald Menzel wrote a very readable book (*Flying Saucers*, Harvard, 1953) inspired by this idea, and his views still have some currency among those who don't look into the matter very thoroughly. For example, we find Lester del Rey winding up his lively article "The Saucer Myth" (*Fantastic Universe*, August) with the blithe assertion that "most of the objects could be caused by refraction in the air; Menzel has demonstrated how this might work." *O sancta sim-*

*plicitas!* Let us examine the Air Force's findings on the subject in its Project Blue Book Special Report # 14. In Table A-1, we find that of the 3200 sightings reported in the period 1947-1952, the Project's expert consultants (hardly saucer cultists) deemed only 1.8% to be reasonably explicable as "light phenomena." Further comment on this naive conjecture seems unnecessary.

UFOs that make noises are almost, though not quite, as uncommon as those that can be explained away by Menzel's theories. Even so, there are far more examples than we have room to quote. Readers of Charles Fort will recall that this feature turns up in a number of the nineteenth-century cases he collected. We will mention only the "headless monster" (or construction). There are numerous attachments," that made such a noise that it woke up the pastor of the Methodist church of Crawfordsville, Indiana, at 2 a.m. on Sept. 5, 1891 (p. 637, omnibus edition). There are numerous others; among the several examples of cigar-shaped bodies carrying lights which Fort chronicles, the sound of a motor is mentioned more than once.

Among the more recent references, we have an abundance of data. Three months before Kenneth Arnold's historic sighting, the following re-

markable observation had been made by Mary Schwarzkopf of Woodland Hills, California, if we may believe her letter printed in *Fate*, October 1952. Here is her account, somewhat condensed:

"About 4 in the afternoon in late March of 1947, I was looking out over the San Fernando Valley from the window of my home. To the northwest I saw something like a squadron of planes, stretched out in a 'V' formation. From their fluttering and undulating sort of flight, I thought for a moment that I was watching birds. However, these things were flashing like bright aluminum. Then they veered southward, toward my end of the valley. I was surprised to see that they were not silvery after all, but a dull glowing pale gold. As they drew closer, they seemed to be about as long as the fuselage of a good-sized plane, and in profile looked about the shape of a fuselage without any wings or tail, only somewhat thicker at the center. There were at least eleven of them. I'd say they weren't going more than 150 m.p.h., and were 2500 to 3000 feet up. I noticed they made a kind of hollow clattering: clap, clop, clap, clop.

"It appeared as though the object at the center of the 'V' was towing the others, which were strung out behind it, although I could not see that they were tied in any way. I

could not discern any openings, landing gear, or exhaust. If anyone rides in the things I don't know how they keep from getting seasick because the ones I saw swung from side to side just like a top does when it is about to stop spinning.

"I watched them until they disappeared behind the high hill to my right.

"It was not until June 24th, when Kenneth Arnold's story came out, that I began to have some idea of what I'd watched in blissful ignorance."

The wavering flight noted here is highly characteristic; the sound described, however, seems to be unique. A more "typical" example was described three years later in a letter to CSI President John Du Barry, who was then the Aviation Editor of *True* magazine; the writer was Major Herbert W. Taylor of the Army Signal Corps Reserve, who lived in Clarksburg, California. His letter is somewhat condensed:

"On March 13, 1950, at 5:00 a.m., I was awakened by the unusual sound of a motor. Thinking our washer must have turned on, I arose to investigate. Finding nothing amiss in the laundry room, I started toward the garage to check our water pump. On opening the back door, I saw a tremendous light in the back yard and was certain the sound accompanied it.

"I hurried to waken my

wife, asking her to come quickly 'to see the flying saucer everyone is talking about.' Until this time, neither of us had believed there were any flying discs, as had been reported. She immediately followed me, expecting to see some little silver 'thing' floating in the air. She also heard the loud noise of droning motors, but did not think the sound was connected with the phenomenon she was about to see.

"What we saw, looking into the sky from our back porch doorway, was both amazing and awe-inspiring. As we looked out, a tremendous orange-cast object, as brilliant as light can be, was coming at a fast pace toward the earth. The droning increased in volume as it came closer. The object's position was easterly, slightly left of the waning moon. After several seconds, or perhaps a minute or two, it seemed to hang suspended in the air and hovered with a slight swaying motion from left to right. It continued to hover for fifteen or twenty minutes, during which the sound remained *constantly* the same.

"The sky was cloudless, dark, and star-studded. The object was perfectly silhouetted against this background and seemed to be saucer-shaped. Its edges were smooth and its surface was unmarked. It cast no rays of light or re-

flection—it was just a solid, brilliant mass. There was no accompanying vapor or mist. We watched astounded, not knowing what to expect.

"At the end of fifteen or twenty minutes, the object ceased hovering and started back in the direction from which it had come. As it receded, at the same speed as its descent, *the droning-motor sound diminished as did the size of the disc.*

"It was impossible to estimate the size of the disc, as we were unable to determine its distance. At its nearest point, the object looked about one-half the size of the moon, which on that morning was one-quarter full. We checked the time when we could no longer see any trace of the object in the sky. It was exactly 5:30 a.m. (PST)."

Something like this was seen and heard again over Camp Drum (near Watertown, N. Y.) on the night of September 25, 1952, according to Kenneth Banghart's news broadcast the following evening: many soldiers watched a 20-foot disc with red "exhaust flame" that circled and hovered over the base for half an hour, making a whining noise "like a dynamo."

But these are night-time observations; more can be seen by daylight. At 7 a. m. on March 29th, 1950, two real-estate salesmen fishing on Marrowbone Lake, near Nash-

ville, Tennessee, were startled by a group of dark objects that whined overhead. According to the *Nashville Tennessean* of March 30, D. C. Whiteside, 2212 Lindell Avenue, and Howard T. Williams, 312 East Thompson Lane, saw "between six and 12 dark objects about five feet long" fly overhead and pass behind a hill about 7 a. m. The sky was overcast at the time.

"I heard them first," Whiteside said. "The noise was like the wind blowing through the trees. They were about the size of a 300-pound bomb, and had no motor, but but they were traveling faster than any airplane I ever saw. They were fairly close together, and they all turned together."

"I was baiting my hook," Williams declared. "When I looked up, they were splitting the air open right above my head. They were 200 to 300 feet high and traveling at least 500 miles an hour. They were black, and round, and heavy. Whiteside saw the same thing. It's strange, but a man knows what he sees."

The fishermen said the "saucers" appeared from the southeast, tured into the west, and disappeared in a matter of seconds behind the hills enclosing the lake, all the while losing altitude steadily. The men left the lake at once and reported their experience to James W. Davis, lake super-

intendent. "They were scared," he said. "One of them told me it made his hair stand on end."

Spokesmen at Sewart Air Force Base said the objects could not have been jet planes, which never fly that low over this part of the country, especially under an overcast sky.

A unique description of a noisy UFO was given on April 26, 1954 by Russell M. Peirce, an architect of 55 Pleasant St., Newburyport, Mass. At about 3:30 p.m. he was standing outside the local high school, talking with two friends. All suddenly heard "a very loud, deep roar, like many heavy-duty truck motors all revving up at the same time." Mr. Peirce looked up and saw "a flaming ring", between whitish and flame-color, moving downward and to the right, high in the southeastern sky. A small, bright disc of the same color as the ring was inside, it, touching its lower left quadrant. "The remainder of the center of the ring appeared dark." He had the impression that the object was several miles distant from him. "Then the object seemed to stop, waver, and 'skid around' for a few seconds, after which it went sharply upward and to the right, disappearing from sight very quickly. It did not decrease much in size, rather just faded out of sight. At the same time the appearance changed to that of a solid, silvery-colored disc.

The size appeared slightly smaller than a full moon." The sound was heard by many others, including the high school truant officer, who looked out too late to see the UFO; it lasted about five seconds, and the object was in view for about twenty. Mr. Peirce has excellent distance vision, and is considered a reliable witness. (Newburyport *News*, April 30, and personal letter from Mr. Peirce.)

A widely-publicized UFO, seen by tens of thousands, was the "half-cigar" that flew over Rome, Italy in the early evening of September 18, 1954. Michael Chinigo, INS correspondent in Rome, was one of the eye—and ear—witnesses!

"What attracted my attention was the strange sound the object emitted as it passed overhead", wrote Chinigo (*N. Y. Journal-American*, Sept. 19.) "Previous reports of flying saucers have described them as emitting no sound. The sound from this object was not like the whine of a jet or the droning of an ordinary plane. Rather it was like approaching thunder, but with a staccato effect: a series of explosions that grew louder as the object got closer. This was followed by dead silence as the "thing" stopped, apparently at a height of about 5000-6000 feet.

"After several minutes, it suddenly shot upward. It went straight up vertically into the sky, leaving an exhaust trail of milky white smoke. The air

was perfectly still, and the smoke remained in a vertical trail.

"To me its shape seemed like an inverted sawed-off cone.

"The radar station at Ciampio Airport (Rome) said that the object registered on their screens for a total of 39 minutes."

The most recent example of "UFOgenic" sounds, as this is written, comes to us in a letter from UFO researcher Jim McAshan of Knoxville, Tennessee. The witness, a 35-year-old woman living some ten miles from Knoxville, requested anonymity. She is familiar with jet aircraft and is locally considered a reliable person. At 4:40 p.m. on May 21, 1957, she became aware of an oval or round object approaching in the sky from the southeast, making a noise "like a runaway power mower." She said it was travelling "just above treetop level", and "seemed to bounce along slowly, making this racket." It was metallic, "like a silver dollar", flat or flattish, and appeared to be about six or seven feet in diameter. Unique detail: she described "a stem, or pipe, about three feet long, which seemed to be perforated by a row of holes down its entire length, sticking out of the top." When this object reached a point almost directly overhead, it stopped—like the Roman object—and all noise ceased. After a few moments, it resumed its course

toward the northwest, but now *without any sound*. It was her impression that after proceeding for a few hundred feet, it descended among some pine trees, however, a diligent search of the area the next day revealed no traces. She and her husband made inquiries in the neighborhood, but could find no one else who had seen the object.

When a UFO is seen at very close range, engine sounds of some sort are usually heard. The Lloyd Booth sighting (FU, May) is an example; and we will conclude this selection with two further instances of this type of report. We cannot, of course, be positive that these stories are veracious ones; but it may be remarked that the first is one of the twelve cases chosen as "the cream of the crop" by Project Blue Book in its Special Report #14 of 1955. We reproduce the Report's account, slightly condensed. The observer's name was Bill Squyres, and the place Pittsburg, Kansas.

"At 5:35 a.m. on August 25, 1952, a musician for a radio station, driving to work, noticed an object hovering about ten feet above a field near the road. As he came abreast of it, he stopped his car and got out to watch. Having an artificial leg, he could not leave the road, since the surrounding terrain was rough; however, the object was only about 100 yards from him. It was not absolutely still, but seemed to

rock slightly as it hovered. When he turned off the motor of his car, he could hear a deep throbbing sound coming from the object. As he got out of the car, it began a vertical ascent, with a sound similar to 'a large covey of quail all starting to fly at one time', and ascended vertically through broken clouds until out of sight. The observer states that the vegetation was blown about by the object when it was near the ground.

"Description of the object: It was about 75 feet long, 45 feet wide, and 15 feet thick, shaped like two oval meat platters placed together. It was a dull aluminum color, and had a smooth surface. A medium-blue continuous light shone through the one window in the front section. Through this window the head and shoulders of a man, sitting motionless, were visible.

"In the midsection of the ship were several windows extending from the top to the near edge; these had a blue light, which gradually changed to different shades. There was a large amount of activity and movement in the midsection that could not be identified as either human or mechanical. There were no windows, doors or portholes, vents, seams, etc. visible to the observer in the rear section or underside of the object. A series of propellers 6

to 12 inches in diameter were spaced closely together along the outer edge of the object; these propellers were mounted on a bracket so that they rotated in a horizontal plane. The propellers were rotating at a high rate of speed.

"Investigation of the area soon afterward showed some evidence of vegetation being blown around. Reliability of the observer was considered good."

On the evening of Sunday, Oct. 25, 1953, at about 9:30 p.m., 16-year-old Jimmie Milligan of Santa Fe, New Mexico was driving home from a dance at the Young People's Fellowship when something "came sailing in front of my headlights, so close that I thought I was going to hit it. It looked like a piece of metal blown across the highway by the wind. But then I realized that there wasn't any wind. I slammed on my brakes and turned off the road to the left, where I saw it go. I got out and went up close to it. It was setting in the brush at the side of the road. I just had the light of the moon to go by, but it looked something like a boat-hull—or like two boat hulls stuck together. It was a gunmetal color, sort of like a dull aluminum. I would say it was about three feet high, and

ten feet long, and about five feet across."

Taken aback by the weirdness of this unrecognizable object, Jimmie reached out to touch it. At that moment, it "began roaring, and raised straight up in the air a couple of feet"; then it shot forward in a steep climb toward Santa Fe and was lost in the night. "It made a sound like a washing-machine motor, but even faster; or sort of like a model airplane engine, only not so high-pitched. There wasn't any glow or spitting of fire. There wasn't any heat or smell."

"You should have seen him when he came in the door", his mother said. "He was white and shaky and he looked so odd." She said Jimmy had never been known as overly imaginative. He is a good student, and "has never been especially interested in aircraft or rocket-ships." (Santa Fe *New Mexican*, Nov. 3, 1953.)

These cases show similarities, but they demonstrate once more *the incorrigible diversity of the flying saucers*. In our next article we will take up an acoustic phenomenon that is strikingly constant in its manifestations—the so-called "sky-quakes"—and we will inquire to what extent it can be linked with the presence of unknown objects in the sky.