

LIFE

*THE WEEK
OF THE FLYING
SAUCERS*

*AMERICA'S
FOXIEST
LAWYER*

**CHARLIE
CHAPLIN DIRECTS SOPHIA**



Director Charlie Chaplin, 76, rehearses Sophia Loren for a movie scene with Marlon Brando

APRIL 1 • 1966 • 35¢

®

A Well-witnessed



An amateur photographer named L. Benedek had set up his camera on a tripod atop a hill overlooking Perth, Australia to take some night views of the city. As he told it later, "I noticed a bright light descending from a great height. It was radiating a light greenish glow and had an exhaust trail of the same color. Its shape, as well as I could judge it, was slightly oval." Benedek took a picture. "When it reached a height of approximately 20 feet above the water, it slowed to a speed of about five miles per hour and I took another picture. As I was preparing to take one more, the object shot up into the air vertically with enormous speed and disappeared within three seconds. . . ."



'Invasion'—by Something

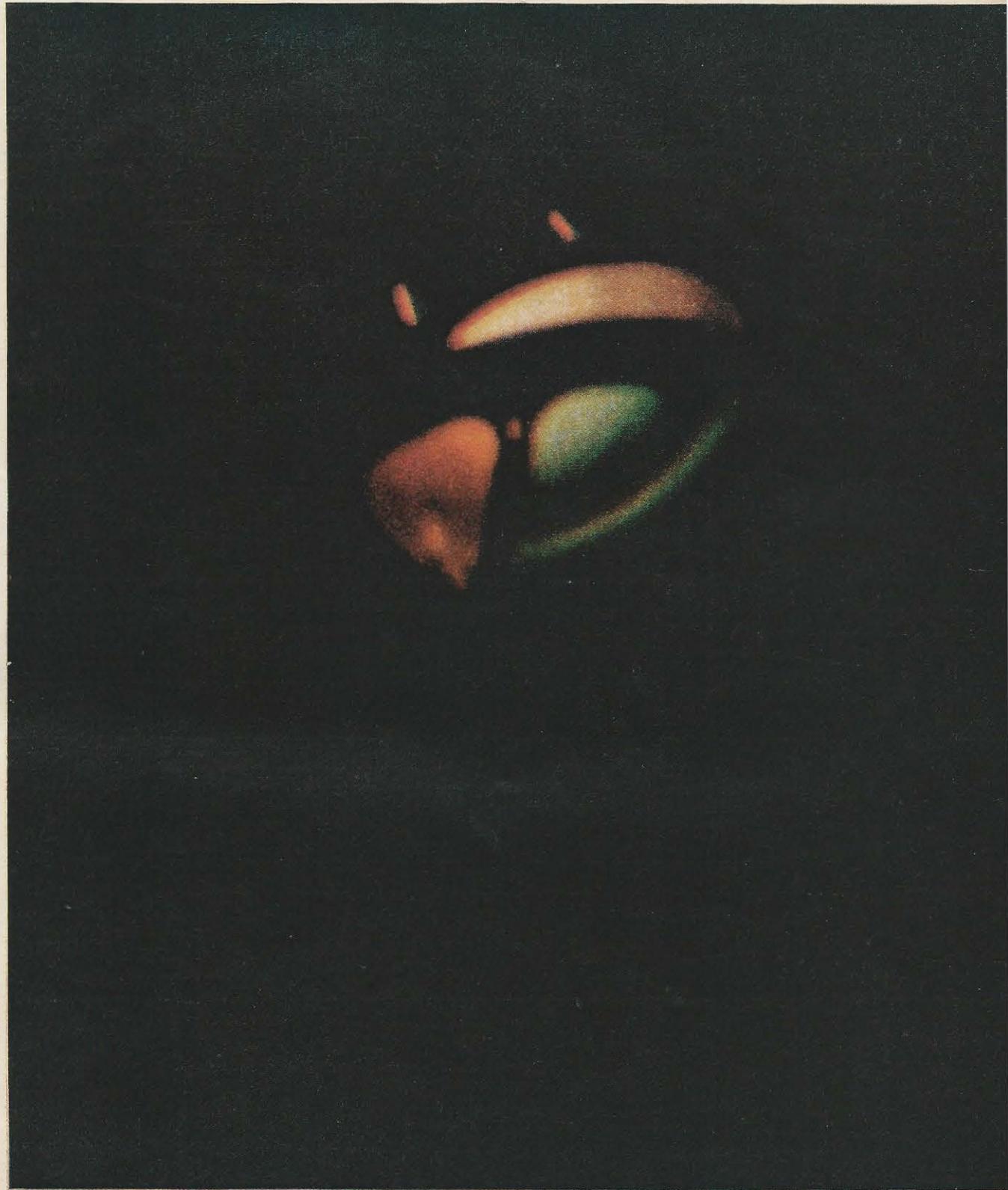
From Australia to Michigan, a flurry of eerie UFO sightings

Call them what you will: flying saucers, Unidentified Flying Objects (UFOs), optical illusions, or the first symptoms of the silly season. They are back again—and seen by more people than ever before. Some are greenish and iridescent, like the mystery thing that swooped down over Perth, Australia several weeks ago (*left and below*). Others are football-shaped and aglow with pulsating lights. Last week the manifestations seemed almost to have reached the proportions of an invasion. Near Ann Arbor, Mich. 52 witnesses, including a dozen policemen, saw five strange objects hovering over a swamp (*see p. 28*). The next day a glowing thing floated over a small college in Hillsdale, Mich. and was sighted by 87 students, an assistant dean and the local civil defense director. Whatever the explanation of the peculiar phenomena—seen and described similarly by so many—*something* surely was in the air.





Luminous Pulsating Shapes That Hover in the Night



Mark Roth, a 22-year-old photographer who lives in New York, was strolling with his girl friend in a park near her home in Queens. Suddenly, looking up, he saw "an orange-silver object that gave off a yellowish light." They dashed to her house, scooped up a camera and hurried back. Roth's first shot caught the object on the horizon (top left) "and then it flattened out and vanished" (bottom left).

This photograph of an unidentified object in the sky was taken last fall by Alan Smith, a 14-year-old Tulsa newspaperboy, and subsequently was copyrighted by the Oklahoma Journal Publishing Co. "It was changing color from white to red to blue-green," Alan said later. "It pulsed with a high whining sound emitting from it. As the sound grew louder, the light was brighter. It gave us the creeps."



'It wasn't no hullabillusion,' said the farmer, and 52 agreed

Frank Mannor has never believed in flying saucers. Hasn't any need of them. Wishes he'd never seen one. Frank should have been born in the day of Dan'l Boone. Since he wasn't, he's on the unemployment. Still, he's a happy man. Or was.

He is a husky, grizzled fellow of 47 who has 10 children, a well of water with an outside pump, a solidly built privy, a TV set and a battered refrigerator with the coil on top. Four disembodied automobiles rest beside his white, tumbledown, two-story farmhouse in the open country 12 miles northwest of Ann Arbor. They provide parts for his good car. He has an ancient school bus for hunting expeditions. He also has six dogs. The dogs started it all. When they began "barkin' and bellerin'" at 8 o'clock that Sunday night, Frank ran outside—even though he was wearing his suit pants—and looked east into swampland from the rise of ground on which the house is built. He saw lights and a faint red glow "like cigarets being smoked."

Frank called his 19-year-old son, Ronnie. Suit pants or not, they started down toward whatever it was. "I thought a meteor had hit, that

maybe we could pick up pieces of it," Frank said.

It never for a minute occurred to him that the U.S. hadn't had a good, mysterious flying saucer manifestation for a coon's age, that it was probably time for a new visitation from the mysterious little men from outer space and that they had decided to use southern Michigan in general and his swamp in particular for the dangdest display of flashing lights and whizzing half-seen objects since Frank Perkins fired a .22 rifle at a New York crow—and hit a fireworks factory—back in 1951.

Frank Mannor soon realized that he and his son were stalking some kind of Thing. The ground between his house and the swamp is hummocky, rolling, but the night was clear and moonlit and the glow ahead was plain. "Just like we were hunting deer," Frank said to Ronnie. "Don't talk, we'll sneak up on it."

They jumped a creek, climbed a rise, and there it was, a few hundred yards ahead in the marsh. The Thing seemed as long as an automobile, and wore a green light on one end and a white light on the other. Its back was humped and looked grayish- or bluish-brown and was "quilted" or

rough "like coral rock." It seemed to be sitting perhaps eight feet off the ground in a patch of mist. "Like a man in a boat on a misty lake in the morning—you can see the man but can't quite make out the boat."

Suddenly it turned blood red. "Look at that horrible thing, Dad," blurted Ronnie—and the lights instantly went out. Both began running toward it. "I was a-puffin'," said Mannor. "But when we got there it was gone. I hunted for four hours but there was no sign or smell of it. I'm glad I didn't have a gun. I'd a shot it and I might have harmed someone."

Back at the house, meantime, Mannor's wife Leona—a woman who wears shapeless slacks and a flannel shirt with the tail out—decided to call the nearby Dexter village police. "We've got an object out here," she said formally, "that looks like what they call a flying saucer. It's got lights on it down in the swamp."

Since the Mannors are on an eight-party line Leona told a great many other people, too, and the word spread like lightning—or the glow from a flying saucer. Cops and deputy sheriffs were soon tumbling out of cars and thrashing off toward the marsh, and the road beyond the house was jammed solid with the cars of gawkers. Most of them were rewarded for their effort. Dexter Police Chief Robert Taylor and Patrolman Nolan Lee saw the red glow as they stumbled around in the dark; so did Washenaw County Deputy Sheriffs Stanley McFadden and David Fitzpatrick. All reported, like Mannor, that the light eventually vanished. But unlike their host, who said, "I never seen it take off," the cops felt it had zipped away over Mannor's house making a sound like "an ambulance."

"I seen it," said McFadden, "but I still don't believe it."

Dexter Patrolman Robert Hunawill saw a "strange, lighted object" appear over his patrol car as he waited in the road for those who had set out for the swamp. It had red and white lights "which at times had a bluish tinge" and made continuing sweeps

over the swamp at a height of 1,000 feet and then, on being joined by three other "objects," flew away. Chief Taylor's 16-year-old son Robert saw one lighted thing at 10:30. It flashed red and white and hurried off to the west.

Ann Arbor, though sharply divided between scoffers and believers the next day, still seemed to feel a unanimous civic pride in the fact that the Air Force had taken cognizance of its lurid phenomenon by dispatching Astronomer J. Allen Hynek, director of Northwestern University's Dearborn Observatory, to weigh the tales of the elect and, no doubt, send a message of gravity and import to the Pentagon. They were even more heartened to hear that Hynek did not instantly announce that Mannor and his fellow bushwhackers had simply seen the University of Michigan's dish-shaped Peach Mountain radio telescope, which stands against the sky beyond the area in which they saw the glowing thing. Hynek, a bearded man who has investigated a hundred other "sightings" for the Air Force in the last two decades, was sure Mannor was too accustomed to the telescope to ever mistake it for anything else.

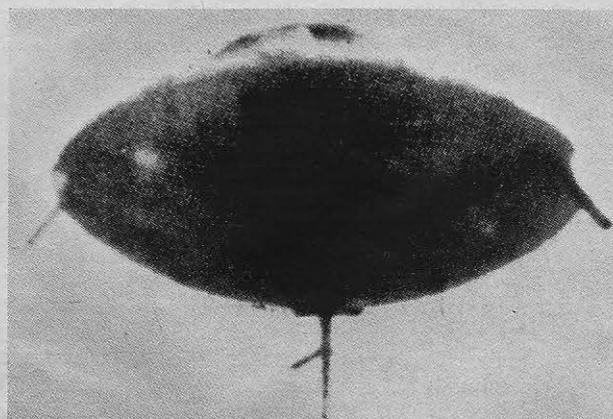
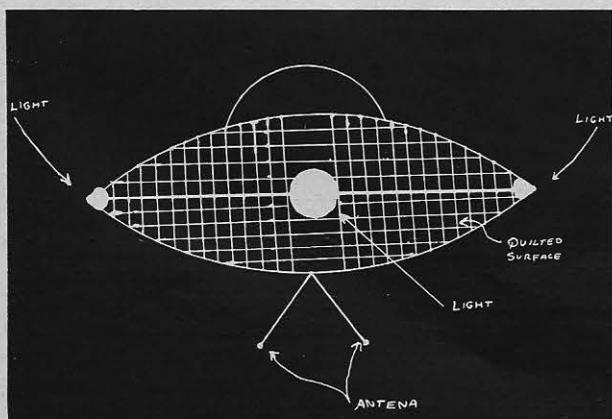
"I believe the people who made these sightings are entirely honest and sincere," he said. "But I am not willing to guess what they saw." He hedged when asked if he thought the thing might conceivably have been a new "test vehicle" of some sort. "I think I know much more of what is going on than . . ." he began, but then halted and said, "so I don't think I should say anything . . . I'm sure there is some natural explanation for all of this."

Back by Frank Mannor's house the road jammed up with the cars of the expectant; one man scraped away at a violin for an hour in the hope of summoning creatures from outer space and another blinked a light in what he described as a "pi code"—which he believed to be the key to interplanetary understanding. Many came to scoff. Mannor grew more indignant by the hour.

"People are trying to make a fanatic out of me," he complained. "They was still tramping around here at 3 o'clock this morning and look at them now. They say, 'How much money are you going to make off this?' That's crazy. I don't want no money. I didn't want no publicity in the first place. I don't want none now. I'm just a simple fellow. But I seen what I seen and nobody's going to tell me different. That wasn't no old foxfire or hullabillusion. It was an object. Maybe it'll come back if all these people would stay away and we could get a picture and have verification of it. Anybody wants to give me a lie-detector test I'll take it."

Leona, his wife, was more succinct: "We ain't Martians—they act like you're not human or something because you seen it. I'm about to get a gun and shoot some of these smart alecks if they don't stay to hell away."

With blinding glare from strategically placed lights in a lonely marsh (left) near Ann Arbor, Mich., LIFE Photographer Bob Gomel re-created farmer Frank Mannor's description of the eerie glow he saw on this exact spot. The sketch below shows details of the "vehicle" Mannor (right) saw when he approached the light. The sketch bears a striking resemblance to UFO photographed from a Navy ship off the coast of California in 1957. Note its conformation, running lights, cabin and antennas. The rough exterior of the object in the photo appears to jibe with the description Mannor and his 19-year-old son gave police: "It was rough and pitted all over like coral rock."



by PAUL O'NEIL

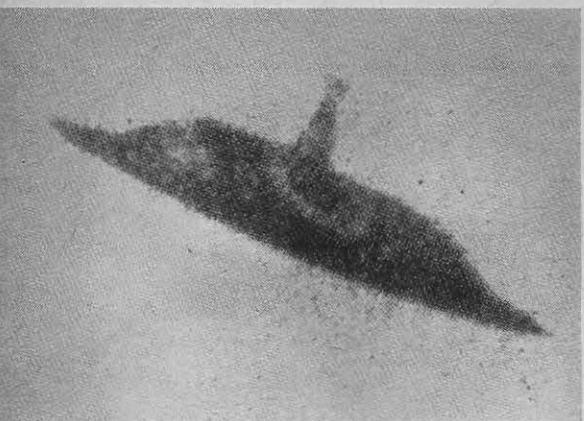
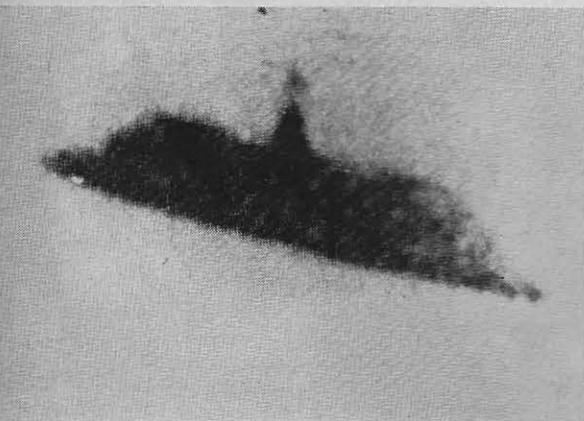
Of 10,147 flying saucer sightings, there are

Ever since the Old Testament prophet Ezekiel recorded an encounter with a fiery flying wheel, people have been seeing saucerlike things in the sky. In the following report LIFE Correspondent Bill Wise tells of the Air Force's efforts to make sense of it all.

There have been 10,147 reported UFO sightings since a private pilot named Kenneth Arnold claimed he saw a set of rapidly moving "things" in the air near Mount Rainier, Wash. on June 24, 1947. Arnold's widely publicized report set off the first of the modern epidemics of saucer-sighting, and the Air Force has been in the saucer business ever since. Its "Project Bluebook" occupies a single room on the second floor of a windowless red concrete building here at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. Its functions: 1) to try to find an explanation for all reported sightings of unidentified flying objects, 2) to discover whether the UFOs pose any security threat and 3) to determine if UFOs exhibit any advanced technology which the U.S. could put to use.

To assist Project Bluebook, there is a UFO officer stationed at every Air Force base in the country; the officer at the base nearest a reported sighting is responsible for initiating the investigation. According to Major Hector Quintanella Jr., a physicist who heads Project Bluebook, most

The pictures below show saucers of marked similarity. The UFO at bottom was photographed in 1950 in Oregon, and its near-twin was filmed four years later in France.



UFO sightings have a rational and usually very simple explanation. The most common reports stem from bright stars, planets and meteorites, particularly when viewed through broken clouds or haze.

Others turn out to be satellites—few people realize that there are now more than 30 of these in orbit that are visible to the naked eye. Thousands of balloons—some as large as 300 feet in diameter, some carrying running lights—are released daily at airports, weather stations and research centers, and these lead to a great many "saucer" reports. Conventional aircraft are another major source—reflecting sun by day or providing the glow of running lights or jet afterburners or the flash of photo recon strobe lights at night.

All satellites and most weather balloons and aircraft are being carefully tracked and logged by military or civilian agencies, and Project Bluebook routinely checks sightings against these records. Unreported local flights by private aircraft pose the most frequent problem in this detective work.

Strange blips on radar screens have occasionally unsettled personnel at tracking stations—e.g., two "objects" that appeared on the scopes at Patuxent Naval Air Station (Md.) last December seemingly approaching the base at an estimated 4,800 miles an hour before making a tight turn and disappearing. But these can generally be traced to pulsating "bugs" within a receiving set or to interference from other neighboring electronic gear. Wright-Patterson experts have been able to account for every errant radar blip reported to date.

There is no question that our Air Force and those of other countries employ assorted airborne hardware as tactical and training devices. Many of these are, of course, "seen" as flying saucers and it is obvious that for security reasons the Air Force is reluctant to talk about them.

I've looked at the records of nearly every UFO case back to 1947," says Major Quintanella, "and my feeling is that the vast majority have involved simple misinterpretation of natural phenomena."

Of the sightings so far checked out, less than two percent of the total are listed on Project Bluebook's file as "unidentified." The Air Force officially concludes that none of these has given any indication of posing a threat to national safety, or offering new technological data, or of originating from some extraterrestrial source. However, some of these files remain officially "open" and the investigations on them continue.

Dr. J. Allen Hynek, director of Dearborn Observatory at Northwestern University, who is heading up the Ann Arbor investigation for the Air Force, is an old hand at checking on flying saucers for Bluebook (pp. 28, 29). Dr. Hynek notes that sight-

ing reports usually do not originate with persons who believe in outer-space visitations. "Believers" don't need sightings to convince them, and are irritated by the embarrassment and skepticism with which most UFO spotters, like Frank Mannor, report what they believe they have seen.

"It is easy to dismiss the cases of birds, balloons and the like," says Dr. Hynek, "but when good solid citizens report something puzzling, I believe we have an obligation to do as good a job as we can. I regard our 'Unidentifieds' as a sort of blot on the escutcheon. Somehow we scientists should be able to come

up with answers for these things."

Major Quintanella, although certain that no evidence turned up to date has even hinted at spacecraft of unearthly origin, agrees that "it is impossible to prove that flying saucers do not exist." In any event, the Air Force is not about to give up chasing UFOs.

"We are spending millions to develop our own rocket boosters to get our spacecraft to the moon and beyond," says the major, smiling. "Imagine what a great help it would be to get our hands on a ship from another planet and examine its power plant."



Major Hector Quintanella Jr., custodian of the Air Force "Project Bluebook," is bemused target of flying saucer believers—and cynics too. Some of the bogus items they have tried to fob off on him as coming from outer space

the halves of a copper shell filled with earthly radio parts which someone said might be part of a satellite. At right is a candle-shaped object used to keep water pipes from rusting, and in the foreground some buckwheat pancakes that somebody contributed.

rational explanations for all but 646

One of the witnesses who saw the UFOs near Ann Arbor, Mrs. Ruth Spaulding, holds up crockery to show what they looked like.

