

[This report on the release of the Testor's Aurora Model (less than 3 minutes) appeared on the CBS Evening News on Nov. 11, 1993.]

Dan Rather: And there may be something else new under the sun tonight. Does the United States military have a new Top Secret--or at least used-to-be Top Secret--mystery plane. As CBS News national security correspondent David Martin reports, there have been several sightings, but not where you'd expect.

David Martin (narrating): Presenting Aurora, the Pentagon's secret weapon capable of streaking from Washington to Bagdad in 90 minutes. For years it was only whispered about. Now you can see it with your own eyes, right next to the '57 Chevy at this year's model and hobby show. Its maker swears its a replica of the real thing.

John Andrews, Model Plane Designer: We feel comfortable that it absolutely does exist and is flying today.

Martin: The toy Aurora, nestled atop its mother ship, was born of a genuine mystery. What left these donuts-on-a-rope contrails in the skies over the Southwest? What has caused sonic booms near Los Angeles as loud as the Space Shuttle?

Jim Mori, U.S. Geological Survey: They all occur on Thursday morning. I think we've had about eight of them in the last couple years, and they occur between six and seven in the morning.

Martin: Why is the Air Force buying up land around this secret test site in the Nevada desert? Why, as this satellite picture shows, has the Air Force lengthened the runway? Why, if not to accommodate a high speed aircraft like Aurora?

Bill Sweetman, Aviation Expert: It probably has a range of about five thousand miles, and it may be capable of speeds as high as 4,000 miles an hour.

Martin: Aurora would be the latest and greatest in a long line of secret airplanes. Except the Air Force swears it ain't so. "The Air Force has no such program," the secretary of the Air Force wrote last year. So who are you going to believe: the Secretary of the Air Force or the toy maker?

John Andrews: The model toy maker over the years has developed a vast network of people that he calls Desert Rats that see airplanes flying in Southern California and Nevada and it's that network that keeps sending back that information.

John Pike, Fed. of American Scientists: Some people would like to believe that there are these marvelous machines hidden under mountains and that there is some sort of secret Air Force...

Martin: If Aurora doesn't exist, it was only a matter of time before somebody invented it. But what did cause those sonic booms? David Martin, CBS News, Washington.

[Transcribed by Glenn Campbell]