

UFO's 1960

(A written version of the talk presented to the Hypervelocity Impact Conference at Eglin Air Force Base, April 27, 1960)

Director Aerospace Studies Inst ATTN: Archives Branch Maxwell AFB, Alabama	RETURN TO: A. Hynek Bldg 1000
---	-------------------------------------

I find it intriguing that at such a distinguished gathering as this I, an astronomer, should be asked to address you, not on the subject of satellite tracking—my work for the past four years—nor on stellar spectroscopy, stellar evolution, nor on the expanding universe—all topics to which I could do some manner of justice—but on Unidentified Flying Objects. Not that I am not qualified to speak on this topic. Perhaps, if I may be permitted to say so without incurring the charge of immodesty, I am uniquely qualified in all except one way to speak to you—and that exception is simply that I have never seen a UFO. But I have had as much experience, I daresay, as perhaps almost anyone with UFO's on their own plane of existence. And on that plane they are as real as rain. That plane is that of reports—for as far as any of us here are concerned—unless some of you in the audience have had personal experience—they exist for you and me simply as reports.

-MORE-

25  
25

1003844

This sighting was but one of a great many that took place during the great airship episode of 1897—the ship that was sighted and its progress watched all the way from San Francisco to Virginia. A look at the newspaper files of that day will recount the events.

Let us come to more recent times: Again—let me remind you that as before we are dealing at the level of reports. These are nothing but reports I bring before you—and on their level of existence, they are real--that is--real reports.

November 2, 1957, Levelland, Texas: At 10:50 the police station received a call from a local farmhand and part-time barber, Pedro Saucedo (a symbolic name), and his companion Joe Salaz. The story: We first saw a flash of light in the field to our right, and we didn't think much about it—then it rose up out of the field and started toward us, picking up speed. When it got nearer, the lights of my truck went out and the motor died. I jumped out and hit the deck as the thing passed directly over the truck with a great sound and a rush of wind. It sounded like thunder, and my truck rocked from the blast. I felt a lot of heat. Then I got up and watched it go out of sight toward Levelland.

Saucedo said the object was torpedo shaped—like a rocket—and estimated it as 200 feet long. Afraid to return to Levelland for fear of encountering it again, the two men drove on to Whiteface, ten miles west of Levelland, where they phoned in their report. Although Saucedo sounded terrified, the

officer on duty did not at that time take the report seriously.

But an hour later the police got another telephone report. Jim Wheeler, about four miles east of Levelland, had seen a blazing 200-foot egg-shaped object sitting on the road ahead of him. At the same time, his car lights went out and his motor died. The object rose and disappeared. A few minutes later came a call from Witharral, ten miles north-northeast of Levelland; Jose Alvarez reported that his lights and motor had gone dead as he drove near a bright, egg-shaped object on the road. At 12:15 a.m. Frank Williams of Kermit, Texas, reported a similar encounter in the same area. While the officials were out investigating—and, incidentally, reporting strange lights themselves—the police station received a call from James Long, who reported that at 1:15 a.m. he had been driving on a farm road five miles N.W. of Levelland when he came upon a 200-foot-long, egg-shaped mass that glowed like a neon sign. His engine coughed and died, and his lights went out. As he got out and approached the object, which was less than a hundred yards away, it suddenly took off straight upwards. After the object was gone, his engine started easily.

These engine stoppings, we remember, also occurred in the French incidents. The next day two more witnesses reported to the police that they had encountered a UFO. Texas Freshman was approaching Levelland at 12:05 a.m. when he noticed his ammeter jump to discharge and back—then his motor quit as if

it were out of gas—and the lights went out. He got out and looked under the hood but could find nothing wrong. Turning around he saw on the road ahead an egg-shaped object with a flattened bottom—like a loaf of bread and glowing not as bright as neon. No portholes or propellers were visible. Frightened, Wright got back into his car and tried to start it, but without success. After a few minutes, the egg rose almost straight up, veered slightly to the north and disappeared from view in a "split instant." After it was gone, the car started normally.

And now, let us come up almost to the present. This month (April at LaCamp, Louisiana, there was a sighting which bears some relation to those in France. There was, unfortunately, only one visual witness but several auditory witnesses. The object or object—but witness says one object—came silently out of the north, and the attention of the witness was first attracted by loud explosions and a bright fiery red light at ground level about two or three hundred yards away. Witness stated that the object and light combined had the size of a nickel held at arm's length and that it appeared to circle, bounce, then turned and went off into space after it had made a number of momentary contacts with the earth. The entire phenomenon lasted only two or three seconds, but when daylight was available again pictures were taken of the impact points. On five of these, paint or metallic substance had scraped off but no other physical evidence



# Fiery Object Reported In Wide Area Over Texas

THE EVENING STAR A-5  
Washington, D. C. \*\*\*  
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1957.

LEVELLAND, Tex., Nov. 4 (AP)—Reports of a mystery object, which one witness said flew around with a "great sound and rush of wind," had officials and the public puzzled today.

Newsmen and authorities had reports of sightings over a wide West Texas area Saturday and yesterday.

Peace officers checking areas where landings were reported were unable to find any trace.

Pedro Saucedo, 30, a farm hand and part-time barber here, told officers and newsmen, "I was driving out to a farm near the Pettit community (west of here, Saturday night) with a friend, Joe Salaz, when we first saw the thing. We first saw a flash of light in a field to our right, and we didn't think much about it at first."

### Trucks Lights Go Out

"When it got near, the lights of my truck went out and the motor died. I jumped out of the truck and hit the dirt because I was afraid. I called to Joe, but he didn't get out. The thing passed directly over my truck with a great sound and a rush of wind. It sounded like thunder and my truck rocked from the blast. I felt a lot of heat. Then I got up and watched it go out of sight toward Levelland."

Mr. Saucedo, a Korean War veteran, said it was "torpedo shaped" or like "a rocket," but much larger.

Ronald Martin, 18, a Levelland truck driver, said his truck engine died and the lights went out "when a big ball of fire dropped on the highway" east of here early yesterday. Young Martin said the object changed to a bluish green color when it settled on the highway, then changed to a fireball again when it rose straight up and disappeared.

### About 15 Reports

Newell Wright, a Texas Tech student from here, reported a similar occurrence also east of Levelland.

Police Patrolman A. J. Fowler said Mr. Saucedo, and about

14 others who called in reports of the object sounded upset and in some cases terrified.

"They seemed to agree that this something was 200 feet long, shaped like an egg and was lit up like it was on fire—but looked more like neon lights," he said.

"They said it was about 200 feet in the air, and when it got close car motors and lights would go off. Everybody that called was very excited," he said.

- Mr. Levy.....
- L/C Cappuccini.....
- Mr. Welch.....
- L/C Moritz.....
- Mr. Sullivan.....
- Maj Sproull.....

NOV 31 1957

24-785-474 x 4

OFFICE OF  
INVESTIGATIONS

(WASHINGTON EVENING STAR)  
4 Nov 1957, PAGE A-5  
CLIPPED BY       

HQ OSI USAF File Nr. \_\_\_\_\_  
A&D Br \_\_\_\_\_

411

APPEARED IN EVERY MAJOR NEWSPAPER IN U.S. — ALSO TV + R.T.D.C.

# Fiery Flying Object Stops Texas Trucks

5. NOV. 57 — TUCSON DAILY CITIZEN

LEVELLAND, Tex. — (AP) — Reports of a mystery object which one witness said flew around with a "great sound and rush of wind" had officials and the public puzzled today.

Newsmen and authorities had reports of sightings over a wide west Texas area Saturday and yesterday.

Peace officers checking areas where landings were reported were unable to find any trace. Reese Air Force Base officials here declined to say whether an investigation was being made.

Pedro Saucedo, 30, a farm hand and part-time barber here, told officers and newsmen, "I was driving out to a farm near the Pettit community (west of here) Saturday night with a friend, Joe Salaz, when we first saw the thing. We first saw a flash of light in a field to our right, and we didn't think much about it at first.

"When it got near, the lights of my truck went out and the motor died. I jumped out of the truck and hit the dirt because I was afraid. I called to Joe but he didn't get out. The thing passed directly over my truck with a great sound and a rush of wind. It sounded like thunder and my truck rocked from the blast. I felt a lot of heat. Then I got up and watched it go out of sight toward Levelland," he said.

Saucedo, a Korean War veteran, said it was "torpedo shaped" or like "a rocket," but much larger.

Ronald Martin, 18, a Levelland truck driver, said his truck engine died and the lights went out "when a big ball of fire dropped on the highway" east of here early Sunday. Martin said the object changed to a bluish green color when it settled on the highway, then changed to a fireball again when it rose straight up and disappeared.

Newell Wright, a Texas Tech student from here, reported a

similar occurrence also east of Levelland.

Police Patrolman A. J. Fowler said Saucedo and about 14 others who called in reports of the object sounded upset and in some cases terrified.

"They seemed to agree that this something was 200 feet long, shaped like an egg and was lit up like it was on fire—but looked more like neon lights," he said.

"They said it was about 200 feet in the air, and when it got close car motors and lights would go off. Everybody that called was very excited," he asserted.

Sheriff Weir Clem said he saw a brilliant light in the distance but didn't get close enough for a good look. Highway Patrolmen Lee Hargrove and Floyd Cavin reported seeing similar flashes in the sky in about the same area and at the same time as Clem. All were riding in separate cars.

Galley 67—THE WORLD OF FLYING SAUCERS

the Harvard-Smithsonian Observatories to cover Moonwatch observations of the new Sputnik gave a sketchy summary of the incident to Dr. Menzel, who also concluded that Saucedo might have seen an unusually bright meteor and, startled by its brilliance, might accidentally have killed the engine. Lacking news of Sputnik II, the reporter sent in a facetious story asserting that, according to the director of the Harvard College Observatory, the flying eggs were mirages that so frightened the drivers that they reacted by pressing a "nervous foot" on the accelerator and killing the engine. When the weather conditions at Levelland became known, of course, the meteor theory was immediately discarded. Dr. Nininger, of the American Meteorite Museum in Arizona, made the best guess of all: Saucedo had observed an example of that rare phenomenon, ball lightning [6].

Within a few days an Air Force investigator visited Levelland to study the incident. Members of civilian saucer groups complained later that, since he spent only seven hours in the area, he had obviously not taken the problem seriously and could not have found the correct solution. Even seventy hours of labor, however, could not have produced a clearer picture. Saucedo had unquestionably had a frightening experience, very much as he originally described it. But as in many UFO sightings, most of the other reports had been stimulated chiefly by the general excitement. Three persons, not "dozens," had seen the phenomenon near the ground. Some ten or fifteen others (including the sheriff) had not observed it at close quarters but had merely seen brilliant flashes of light in the sky.

After studying the weather reports and the descriptions given by the various witnesses, the Air Force issued an explanation, unfortunately ambiguous because it omitted the necessary word "either," stating that the phenomenon observed at Levelland had been "ball lightning or St. Elmo's fire." Supporters of the saucer theory seized on this ambiguity to protest, correctly, that ball lightning and St. Elmo's fire are two different phenomena. They went on to conclude by some process of peculiar logic that neither ball lightning nor St. Elmo's fire was involved and that the phenomenon had actually been a flying saucer.

Saucer publications have printed thousands of words to support this argument. The evidence, however, leads to an overwhelming probability: the fiery unknown at Levelland *was* ball lightning.



## 1 - 4 NOVEMBER 1957 SIGHTINGS

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>OBSERVER</u>	<u>EVALUATION</u>
Nov	Brazil (CASE MISSING)	Civilian	Insufficient Data
Nov	Garwd, Poland	Civilian	Astro (METEOR)
Nov	Hemet, California	Civilian	Insufficient Data
1	New Orleans, Louisiana	Sessums	Aircraft
1	Huntington, West Virginia	Cooper	Other (UNRELIABLE OBSERVES)
1	Detroit, Michigan	James	Astro (VENUS)
1	Atlanta, Georgia	Dupuy	Insufficient Data
1	Swansea, Illinois	Roever	Astro (METEOR)
2	Canadian, Texas	Calvin	Other (UNRELIABLE REPORT)
2	Brooktondale, New York	Shearing	Other (SEARCHLIGHT)
2	Ft Worth, Texas	Coffman, Thompson	Astro (METEOR)
2	Atlantic Ocean	Military	Astro (METEOR)
2-3	Levelland, Texas (E)	Multi	Other (BALL LIGHTNING)
3	White Sands, New Mexico	Multi	Astro (MOON/VENUS)
3	Belmar, New Jersey	Slade	Insufficient Data
3	Long Beach, New York	Merl, Lang	Astro (VENUS)
3 ( )	Asbury Park, New Jersey	Sandler	Balloon
3	Greenville, Alabama	Poole	Insufficient Data
3	Tucson, Arizona	Multi Partick	Astro (METEOR)
4	Mount Dora, Florida	Herblin	Other (KITE)
4	Dunedin, Florida	Pratt, Davies	Other (CONTRAILS)
4	Oro Grande (Alamogordo), New Mexico	Stokes	Other (MIRAGE/PSYCH)
4	Astoria, Missouri	Pollepe	Insufficient Data
4	Mitchell Field, Long Island, New York	Tortorello	Balloon
4	Marietta, Georgia	Simpson	Insufficient Data
4	Birmingham, Alabama	Benley	Astro (METEOR)
4	Kirtland AFB, New Mexico (CASE miss)	Military Moreno	Astro (METEOR)
4	Milwaukee, Oregon	Military Schultz	Astro (VENUS)
4	El Paso, Texas	Burton	Other (UNRELIABLE REPORT)
4	Cayucos, California	Harrington	Astro (VENUS)
4	Noisant, Louisiana	Lacouse	Astro (METEOR)
4	Atlantic (Jamaica, Miami)	Westerveld	Astro (METEOR)
4	Kirtland AFB, New Mexico (CASE miss)	Brink, Greer, Kaser (RADAR)	Aircraft

## ADDITIONAL REPORTED SIGHTINGS (NOT CASES)

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>SOURCE</u>	<u>EVALUATION</u>
Nov	Universe	Science News Ltr	
2	Brown Mountain, North Carolina	Newsclipping	
3	Amarillo, Texas	Newsclipping	
4	Itaipu Fort, Brazil	Newsclipping	
4	Kodiak, Alaska	Newsclipping	
4	Elmwood Park, Illinois	Newsclipping	

(\*) IN SEPARATE FOLDER