

Scientists should look closely at the Big Bang,

By Irena Scott

ON THE EVENING of October 11, 1973, a thunderous boom roared through a 10-state area in the Midwest, including Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Maryland, and West Virginia. The sound was accompanied by an increase in UFO sightings. Police switchboards lit up, with most callers reporting low-level objects.

A week after the boom, Ohio's *Columbus Dispatch* reported that central Ohio law enforcement agencies received 150 UFO reports on October 17—the largest recorded number of sightings ever received in a 24-hour period.

Several years later, when I moved to Ohio, I began collecting newspaper accounts and interviewing scientists and researchers. My report, "Investigation of a Sound Heard Over a Wide Area," was published in *Ohio Journal Science* (November 1987).

The October 11, 1973, sound, which shook houses and furniture, was described variously as a thunderous boom, an explosion, a shock wave, and a tremor. It first became evident over Indiana and western Ohio and traveled east to the coast.

Earliest reports came from the Wapakoneta, Ohio, area about 8:30 p.m. The sound was reported at 8:41 p.m. at Lockbourne near Columbus, and at 8:45 p.m. in Delaware, Ohio.

A seismograph at Pennsylvania State University's Seismic Observatory recorded a 5-second burst of very high frequency at 8:53

This loud boom was accompanied by the largest number of UFO sightings ever recorded in a 24-hour period.

p.m., simultaneous with a window-breaking, dish-rattling boom heard in central Pennsylvania. This is the only time that can be assumed as accurate. The boom seems to have traveled east at roughly twice the speed of sound.

Could the blast have been caused by an aircraft sonic boom? Air Force officials in Pennsylvania and officers at the Naval Observatory in Washington, D.C., reported they had sighted no aircraft capable of causing a sonic boom or similar sound. Spokespersons at Goddard Space Flight Center in Beltsville, Maryland, and National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in Washington, D.C., said they found nothing that could have caused the noise.

On October 21, 1973, another nighttime sonic boom was heard in Norwalk, Ohio. It was caused by what still is the Air Force's fastest airplane, the SR-71. The *Norwalk Reflector* reported that the sonic boom from the SR-71 had a reach of only about 50 miles—a much smaller area than that of the October 11 blast. And although Norwalk had not been warned in advance

about the October 21 flight, area residents had no trouble identifying the airplane, even in the dark.

Could a squadron of jets stretching over several states and flying at supersonic speeds have caused the boom of October 11? If so, people should have seen at least some of the aircraft. It's important to note that the description of the burst recorded at Pennsylvania State University gives the impression that the October 11, 1973, boom emanated from one source and not from a fleet of jets.

The National Earthquake Information Center in Boulder, Colorado, as well as Pennsylvania State University's Seismic Observatory, and the National Geophysical Data Center all reported no indications of an earthquake anywhere October 11. The *Washington Post* noted that no earthquake stations in the boom area recorded earth tremors large enough to result in the blast.

According to newspaper accounts, officials at Wright Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio, also had no explanation of the blast.

Could the boom have been a meteor? It's known that earthquakes, mining blasts, meteors, and other events each have unique seismograph signatures. No evidence exists that the October 11 boom had the signature of a meteorite. I could find no newspaper reports of meteors or fireballs, nor any other observational evidence of meteors. **And it's important to remember that most of the UFO reports coming in were of low-level objects.**

1973's great wave of UFOs

I found no evidence that the boom was caused by an earthquake, a meteorite, or by any kind of aircraft. There is no reason to think public anxiety or hysteria are related to the October 11 event. Nor is there evidence that the UFO sightings of October 11 were media-induced, since the sightings were reported before media coverage of the boom.

The boom echoed across the Midwestern and eastern United States, along with numerous low-level UFO sightings, and UFO reports dramatically increased during the days following. For example, on October 17, 1973, Franklin County, Ohio, law enforcement offices received a record 150 UFO reports, and officials in Wheeling, West Virginia, received 100 reports.

Hard evidence exists that something happened, specifically a boom accompanied (or perhaps preceded) by other events. It appears that the boom may have represented a physical object entering the Earth's atmosphere at a high speed, but the expected meteorite or craft was never seen. No good evidence exists to indicate an earthquake.

The conclusion of my study is that the October 1973 event, which included the boom and the UFO sightings at low level, is still unexplained. If something alien had entered Earth's atmosphere, briefly interacted, and then left, we would not know it. This points to a problem with the scientific study of UFOs. UFOs do not make regular and predictable appearances. Even when

scientists associated with a landmark study in Missouri between 1973 and 1980 spotted numerous unidentified flying objects, they often were unable to photograph them because the UFOs would disappear, then reappear when cameras could not photograph them, or the UFOs would not show up on film after being photographed.

This scientific study, called Project Identification, was designed by Harley Rutledge, Ph.D., a solid-state physicist and chairperson of the Physics Department at Southeast Missouri State University. He and his team observed UFOs in real time, during the events rather than after the fact. This meant these scientists could determine a UFOs velocity, course, position, distance, and size. Yet the fundamental problem that UFOs presented persisted. While actual physical evidence of an event and much observational data existed, people had no idea what to do with the data.

New methods for studying UFO phenomena are needed. Today's scientific paradigms are based on the idea of controlled experimentation with the basic assumption that humans are in control. This simply is not so.

It's obvious that methods need to be developed to study the UFO phenomena that may be more intelligent than we are. ■

Irena Scott served on the MUFON board of directors from 1993 to 2000 and is a MUFON consultant in physiology and astronomy.

letters from our readers

Try setting your cameras on 'manual'

OTHERS AND I have investigated sightings where cameras and video equipment won't work, but then a few minutes later or the next day they work fine. Perhaps the culprit is the infra-red range-finder beam. Like our fighter jets, UFOs probably have an extremely sensitive system to detect weapons being fired or aimed at them. Most cameras automatically project a beam of some sort to determine the distance of the subject. Thus the UFO would instantaneously respond to any perceived threat, and in some way project a field that would interfere with the electrical system of the camera.

The only way I know to test this theory is to be in a situation where a camera fails to take a picture. At that time the setting could be changed to manual to see if a picture then can be taken. Further experimentation might even provide some insight about the UFO's response system.

At any rate, if a person goes UFO hunting they should set the rangefinder on manual at 50 feet or medium range. —Jim King

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