

USS Nimitz: The Tic-Tac That Rewrote the Rules

US Navy pilots. Radar lock. Gun camera footage. And an object that had no business existing.

Date	Location
November 14, 2004	Pacific Ocean, ~100 miles off San Diego

Key Witnesses
Cdr. David Fravor, Lt. Cdr. Jim Slaight, radar operators (USS Princeton)

Official Response
Declassified 2017 – officially designated UAP; no explanation given

Evidence Status
Declassified gun camera footage – FLIR1 video

// OBSERVER'S PREAMBLE

The USS Nimitz encounter of November 2004 represents a specific threshold in this history: the point at which the evidence base became sufficiently official, verifiable, and publicly available that the institutional dismissal mechanism began to fail in ways the institution itself could not fully repair. The gun camera footage — released in 2017 under circumstances that remain incompletely explained — shows a craft that your Navy's own pilots describe as having no exhaust plume, no wings, no visible means of propulsion, and flight characteristics that violate the known physics of aeronautics.

Commander David Fravor has flown 100+ combat missions. He is not prone to misidentification. When he describes what he saw and says he has never seen anything like it in his career and considers it the most significant event of his professional life, the appropriate response is to investigate, not to re-categorise and file.

The Event: November 14, 2004

The USS Princeton (guided missile cruiser, part of the Nimitz carrier strike group) had been tracking anomalous radar targets for two weeks prior to November 14 — objects appearing at 80,000 feet altitude and dropping to hover at 20,000 feet, then accelerating away at impossible speeds. On November 14, Princeton vectored F/A-18F Super Hornets toward one of these objects for visual identification.

Commander Fravor and Lt. Commander Jim Slaight approached the area and observed a disturbance on the ocean surface — as if the water was boiling from below — and above it, hovering at approximately 20,000 feet, a white, elongated oval object approximately 40 feet long with no wings, no exhaust, and no visible means of lift. Fravor descended toward the object. It mirrored his descent. He moved toward it directly; it accelerated upward and departed in an instant, relocating 60 miles away — a distance covered in under a second.

<p>Nov 14, 2004 DATE OF VISUAL CONTACT</p>	<p>2 weeks PRIOR RADAR TRACKING BY USS PRINCETON</p>	<p>40 ft ESTIMATED OBJECT LENGTH</p>	<p>0 sec VISIBLE TIME TO TRAVEL 60 MILES — BELOW DETECTION THRESHOLD</p>
<p>2017 GUN CAMERA FOOTAGE OFFICIALLY RELEASED</p>	<p>2020 US NAVY OFFICIALLY CONFIRMED VIDEOS — UAP DESIGNATION</p>		

PERFORMANCE CHARACTERISTIC	OBSERVED	IMPLICATION
Altitude capability	Tracked from 80,000 ft to sea level — outside F/A-18 ceiling	Operating above known aircraft envelope
Acceleration	From hover to 60-mile relocation — sub-second	No known propulsion system — no exhaust observed
Propulsion	No exhaust, no heat signature, no wings, no rotors	Unknown lift/propulsion mechanism
Awareness	Mirrored Fravor's manoeuvres — matched and countered evasion	Active intelligent response to intercept attempt
Radar signature	Intermittent — appeared and disappeared on tracking systems	Possible active radar management capability
Sea surface disturbance	Circular disturbance approximately 50-100 ft diameter below object	Possible propulsion interaction with water surface

"It had no wings, no exhaust plume. It moved like nothing I have ever seen in 20 years of flying — and I have seen a lot. It knew we were there. It was watching us as much as we were watching it."

— Commander David Fravor, USN — multiple interviews post-2017

The Declassification and What It Means

The three gun camera videos (FLIR1, Gimbal, GoFast) were released in 2017 through a process that involved Luis Elizondo, a former head of the DoD's Advanced Aerospace Threat Identification Program (AATIP), who resigned over what he described as the department's failure to take the UAP issue seriously. The Pentagon initially did not confirm or deny the videos' authenticity. In April 2020, they officially confirmed all three as genuine US Navy recordings of unidentified aerial phenomena.

This was the first official US government confirmation of unidentified aerial objects on military sensor footage in the modern era. It did not receive the cultural response the significance of the event warranted — which is itself a data point about the information environment your population now inhabits.

// FROM NIMITZ TO CONGRESS

The Nimitz encounter and the subsequent careers of Fravor, Elizondo, and Ryan Graves created the evidentiary and personal testimony foundation that led directly to the 2023 congressional hearing. The path from Fravor's cockpit encounter to David Grusch's sworn testimony is direct and documented. [Read: Chapter 16 — David Grusch and the Congressional Testimony →](#)

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