

## Another Example of How Misinformation Spreads & How Hard It Is to Correct It

### 59. Just Coming From Another Dimension

Possible Camera Used: Sony RX-100  
Where to Buy: Sony  
Avg. Cost: \$1,000\*

This photo brilliantly captures a supersonic fighter jet breaking the sound barrier, and the photograph makes the jet look as though it has come to Earth from another dimension. Breaking the sound barrier has been a thing since the 1940s, when a pilot named Chuck Yeager got his Bell X-1 up to 767 miles per hour, hitting Mach 1. That feat wowed people at the time, as that had never been done before.

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### The Famous Sonic Boom Photo That Doesn't Actually Show a Sonic Boom

How the most famous jet photo in the last few decades may have misrepresented the science behind it.

BY JOHN WENZ PUBLISHED: FEB 16, 2016

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Ensign John Gay / US Navy

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### The Wildly Misunderstood Aeronautics Event Captured in This Photograph

BY DAVID GOLDENBERG • FEBRUARY 16, 2016

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An F/A-18 Hornet over the Pacific Ocean, in July 1999. ENSIGN JOHN GAY/US NAVY

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<https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/the-wildly-misunderstood-aeronautics-event-captured-in-this-photograph>

More of how misinformation gets out there and stays there. The recent CNN article on the left claims the photo captures what happens when a plane breaks the sound barrier. Rather, though the plane may be at supersonic speed, the phenomenon is “flow-induced vaporization that sometimes forms around objects flying at high speeds in the right environmental conditions.”

In *The Right Stuff*, a great and fun movie, when “Chuck Yeager”/Sam Shepard finally breaks the sound barrier, there are strange shimmering lights and a shuddering plane threatening to break in pieces; the boom is first thought to be the Bell X-1 (X-15) blasting apart with Yeager in it. I am still not sure what breaking the sound barrier is really like for the plane and the guy in it. But I would sure like to experience it.

The aerodynamics and aeronautics of all this reveals again how complex our universe is, how only incredibly sophisticated mathematics can begin to give the measure of it.

TJB