

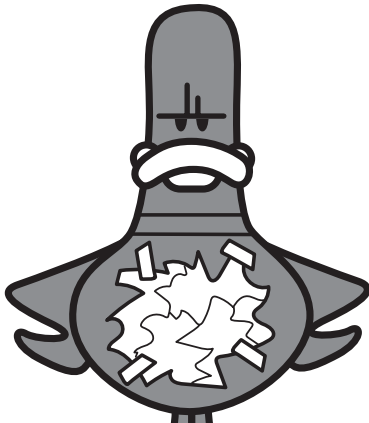
‘Hey, Duck? Would you mind if I stuck aluminium foil to your tummy?’

Mind, he does not.

That night, just after it gets dark, Duck and I return to the fence line where I was banned from the Un-fun Fair. Redhill’s most pathetic attraction is in full swing as people wander around eating ice creams and hot dogs, and trying to decide which activity is least worst.

Duck is in full camouflage. I’ve sticky-taped aluminium foil to his tummy so that it looks all mechanical and shiny. Then he let me paint the rest of him black so that up in the night sky you won’t be able to see him.

Don’t worry, it washes off. I think.



‘Are you ready, Duck?’ I ask him. This is his big moment.

*Quack.*

And he’s away, running across the grass, then taking off into the sky.

Now comes the next part of the plan.

I’ve borrowed one of Dad’s high-powered torches from the shed and I’ve brought with me a few different colours of cellophane from our stash of craft supplies at home. If I hold a piece of green cellophane in front of the torch, it makes the light green. If I change it to a blue piece, the light goes blue. You get the idea.

Now, despite what the Bat-Signal would make you believe, when you shine a torch up into the sky at night, it does nothing at all. You can’t see it. Unless the light hits something reflective ... like the aluminium-foiled tummy of a flying duck, for example.

I start with a green sheet and shine my green light up into the sky above the Un-fun Fair where I know Duck is flying. Now where is he?

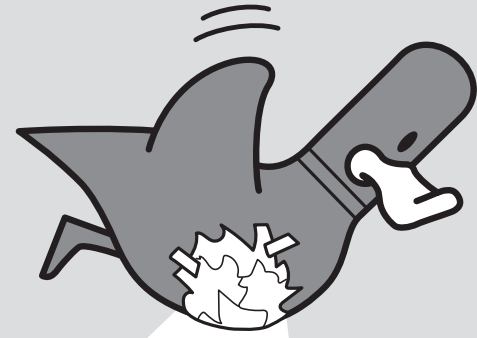
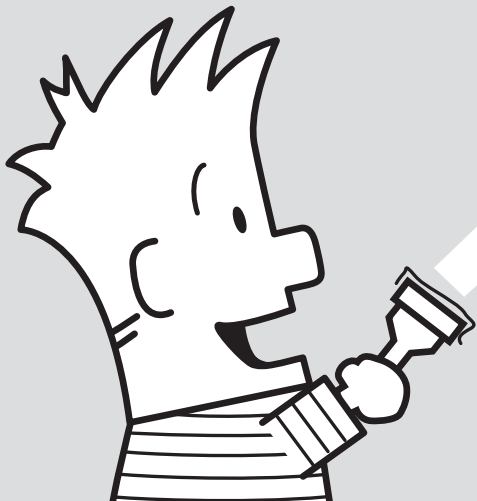
Suddenly there's a flash of green. As Duck flies through the invisible torch beam, his reflective tummy catches the light and creates a flash. I keep moving the beam and he keeps flying around.

*Flash!* There he is again. And *flash!* Again.

I change the cellophane to red.

*Flash!* I managed to follow Duck for a second with the torch that time so that the red line shot across the night sky and then disappeared.

*Flash! Flash!*

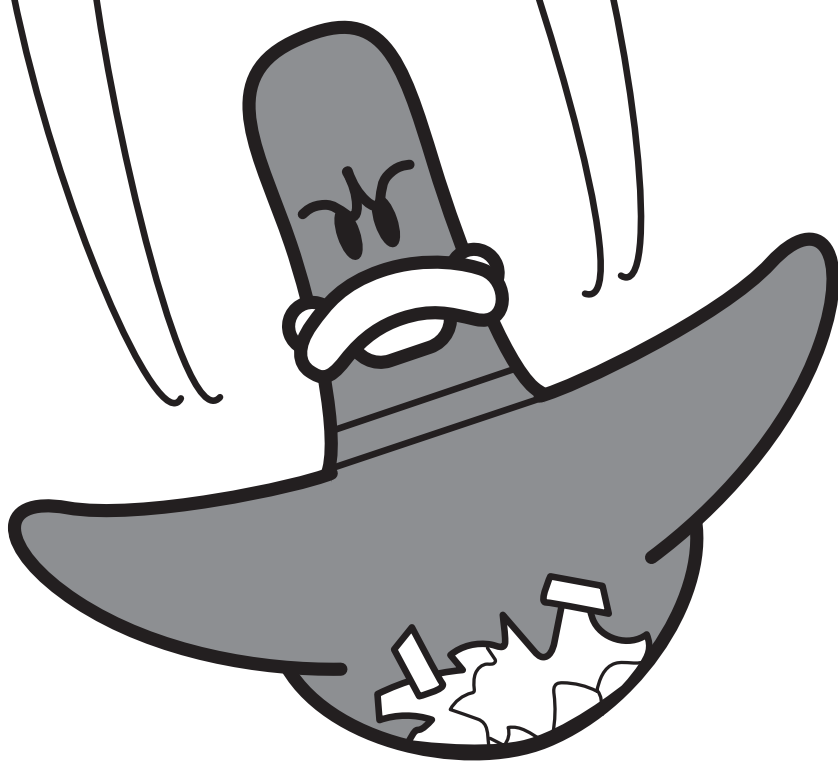


I change the cellophane to blue.

Just as I hoped, people in the crowd begin to notice. I mean, of course they do. They're so bored out of their brains that half of them are staring off into space anyway. And what they're seeing are random flashes of coloured light at all different spots in the sky above their heads.

I change the cellophane to orange.

People are talking now. Calling out to each other. Telling their friends and family to look up. One of the benefits of using a duck instead of a drone is that they fly silently. 'What is that?' people are saying.



I change the cellophane to purple.

Now the Un-fun Fair has all but stopped. Everyone is staring up at the strange lights in the sky. Most of them have their phones out filming. We've only been doing it for about two minutes when I hear the word 'UFO' used for the first time.

I change the cellophane to yellow.

*Flash! Flash! Flash!*

Green. Red. Blue. Orange. Purple.

*Flash! Flash!*

My arm is getting tired. I imagine Duck is probably pretty dizzy. I turn off the torch.

The crowd of people is pointing and filming and talking excitedly. They're entertained and happy and clearly very relieved to have something more interesting to talk about than the Un-fun Fair.

See that, Mayor Lopez? That is how an attention-seeker does it.

Duck, having noticed that I've stopped shining the torch, comes and lands next to me. Even though the coloured lights have disappeared, the people of Redhill have not stopped staring into the sky. They really seem to think they've just seen a UFO.

People are so gullible.

It makes pranking them a real joy.