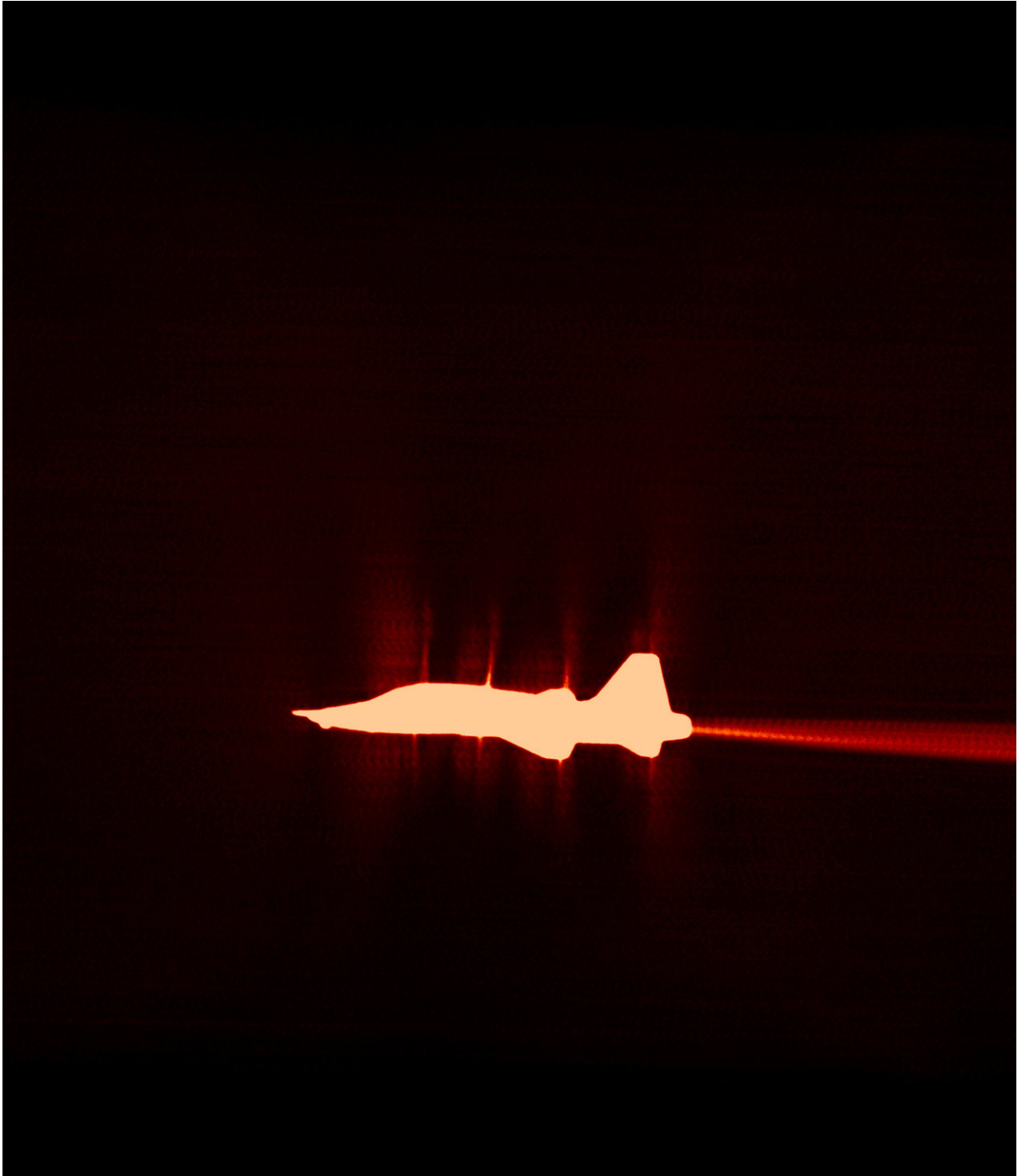


# Image: Seeing an X-plane's sonic boom

December 19 2017

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Credit: NASA

When NASA's next X-plane takes to the skies, it will produce some pretty cool images.

Thanks to the completion of a recent flight test series at NASA's Armstrong Flight Research Center in California, the agency is a step closer to being able to visually capture the shockwaves of NASA's future Low Boom Flight Demonstration aircraft, or LBFD.

In this schlieren image, an Air Force Test Pilot School T-38 is shown in a transonic state, meaning the aircraft is transitioning from a subsonic speed to supersonic. Above and beneath the aircraft, shockwaves are seen starting to form. These shockwaves propagate away from the [aircraft](#) and are heard on the ground as a sonic boom. NASA researchers use this imagery to study these shockwaves as part of the effort to make sonic booms quieter, which may open the future to possible [supersonic flight](#) over land.

Provided by NASA

Citation: Image: Seeing an X-plane's sonic boom (2017, December 19) retrieved 18 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2017-12-image-x-plane-sonic-boom.html>

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