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Encounters with U.F.O.

POLICE said today that two groups of people who reported seaparte encounters with a U.F.O. yesterday both experienced voice changes during the experience.

In the first sighting, a family of four claimed their car was chased by an egg cup-shaped flying object along a remote highway, plucked from the ground and covered in a sort of volcanic ash.

The crew of a tuna boat 50 miles away said they too were buzzed by an unidentified flying object yesterday, and that their voices became blurred as a result.

Faye Knowles, a mother of three, also told police her speech and that of her sons became slurred during the encounter.

Police said the sightings occurred minutes apart.

"We were a little bit sceptical at first," said Sgt. Jim Furnell of Ceduna police in the state of South Australia. "But after investigating, we are treating the reports very seriously."

He said forensic scientists would examine the blackish powdery ash found inside and outside Mrs Knowles' car. She told police she was driving through the Nullabor Plain from Perth in Western Australia state when she saw a glowing object in her rear window.

"It apparently picked the car up off the road, shook it quite violently and forced the car back with such pressure that one of the tyres was blown," said Sgt. Furnell.

"While this was happening the family said their voices were distorted and it was as if they were talking in slow motion."

Mrs Knowles told the police the U.F.O. turned their car around and placed it back on the road facing in the opposite direction.

A truck and another car driver, travelling in the opposite direction on the same highway, also reported seeing the U.F.O.

Sgt. Furnell said the crew of the tuna boat could not have known about the Knowles family experience when they reported a U.F.O. sighting in the Great Australia Bight.

Colin Norris, director of the Adelaide-based Australian U.F.O. Research Centre, the oldest such organization in Australia, said he took the report seriously.

"It fits in with a lot of other sightings in the world," he said. "It appears to be an extra-terrestrial encounter. It's not of this planet."

Homeless bill £100m

IN BRIEF

● A six-year-old boy was the first child in Wales to die from meningitis this year. The unnamed youngster, from the Rhondda area, died on Wednesday after being