

## Meteorites Offered As UFO Explanation

SYDNEY, Australia (AP) — A woman who said a UFO chased her car, picked it up and tossed it to the ground on a lonely outback highway may have lost control of the vehicle during a meteorite shower, an expert said Thursday.

"There is nothing known that could physically pick up a car and do what apparently happened," said the expert, Charles Morgan of the Sydney Observatory.

"Either they went into fright and went into a spin without realizing, or it is an unexplained phenomenon," he said.

Police have accepted the account by the woman, Faye Knowles, of what happened as she drove with her three sons from Perth across the desolate Nullabor Plain in Western Australia before dawn on Jan. 20.

About the same time, the crew of a tuna fishing boat in the Great Australia Bight, about 50 miles from where Knowles was, told police that a bright object had buzzed their boat and made their speech sound slurred.

Knowles also reported that her voice and those of her children had become distorted while the car was airborne and that the encounter had left their vehicle covered in ash.

Morgan said the car could have been hit by a large carbonous meteorite shower, which would ex-

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JIM FURNELL, police sergeant

plain the ash and the Knowles' report of "the smell of dead bodies" inside the car.

"Carbonous meteorites give off a smell," Morgan said. If such showers are large enough, he added, "they also can give off a sonic boom that could explain the hearing problems they experienced. But there's no explanation for the car's being picked up unless they drove off the road, hit a bump and went into the air."

Knowles' story got front-page headlines across Australia.

She said that the glowing egg-shaped object had chased her car after she spotted it through the rear window and that she had driven at 120 mph trying to escape.

"It apparently picked the car up off the road, shook it quite violently and forced the car back (down on the road) with such pressure that one of the tires was blown," said Sgt. Jim Furnell of South Australia state police.

Knowles drove 400 miles to the

Ceduna police station in neighboring South Australia state to report the incident.

Furnell said the roof of the car had been dented and covered in a blackish-grey ash and that the Knowles family had been visibly shaken. He said forensic scientists had yet to examine the car and probably would report next week.

He dismissed the possibility of a hoax, saying the fishing crew and Knowles could not have known about each other.

"It fits in with a lot of other sightings in the world," said Colin Morris, who heads the UFO Research Center in Adelaide. "It appears to be an extraterrestrial encounter. It's not of this planet."

Furnell said the sightings by Knowles and the crew of the fishing boat had been too close together to be a hoax.

"Something happened out there," Furnell said. "I'm no expert. We were skeptical at first, but we accept her story."