

OMNI

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TAMPERING WITH HUMAN EMBRYOS ?

**THE DANGERS
OF TIME TRAVEL**

**SPERM FROM
DEEP SPACE**

**HOW TO DESIGN
YOUR OWN DREAMS**

LASER FACE-LIFTS

ANIMAL TELEPORTATION

**THE SECRET
OF LONG LIFE**

**HOW HOMOSEXUALS
ARE CREATED**



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beams of hatred as strong as
the flash of the
craft supposedly seen by Travis. •

ANTI MATTER

Take one haunted young man, a ruthless cowboy, an eccentric professor, and a hard-drinking psychiatrist. Throw them together with a bunch of sensation-seeking reporters in the desert heat. Add a spaceship manned by little men with fishbowl heads, and you have the makings of a B movie.

But in November 1975 this situation was real, and it turned into that celebrated piece of UFO lore known as the Travis Walton case. I was part of this lunacy, and it left me with the whimsical realization that when it comes to big-bucks ufology, proof is the last thing anyone cares about.

According to six witnesses, Travis, a twenty-two-year-old forestry worker, had disappeared in the Arizona woods, running toward the blinding light of a flying saucer. I was one of a team of reporters from the *National Enquirer* sent to intercept Travis after he reappeared five days later, claiming to have been abducted by aliens. Our task: to win the confidence of Travis's cowboy older brother.

The cowboy was one of the meanest, toughest-looking men I've ever seen—a rodeo pro, a light heavyweight fighter, T-shirt packed with muscle, eyes full of nails, tense, unpredictable. The first time I met him, he leaned against a pickup truck and raked me with beams of cunning and hatred as strong as the flash from the spacecraft that supposedly had terrified his younger brother.

But it turned out that the cowboy could be bought. When he found out the *Enquirer* would offer thousands of dollars to anyone who could prove that aliens had visited our



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planet, he agreed to hide out with Travis in our motel room.

A professor we got to come from Berkeley, California, would put Travis under hypnosis. Travis was mute, pale, twitching like a cornered animal. But the professor was cooing: "You are not alone. There are many people, more than you could even imagine, who have been chosen to meet them."

Them? We began to worry about the professor.

With history and an offer of \$10,000 at stake, Travis spun a ripping yarn of extraterrestrials with skin that looked like

mushrooms. But the euphoria vanished when we brought in the state's top polygraph operator, who, after questioning young Travis, said it was the plainest case of lying he had ever heard. I'll never forget the bug-eyed cowboy's screams of rage. "I'll kill the son of a bitch!"

Then a psychiatrist flew in from Colorado. He locked himself in a room with Travis, the cowboy, and a bottle of cognac. When the three staggered out hours later, he had the story: Travis had been acting out a childhood fantasy, nurtured since his father, a UFO cultist, had left him.

As they departed, the cowboy promised that his sick brother would get the care and rest he needed. But as I neared the airport, my radio was broadcasting their amazing tale of an encounter with aliens.

I asked my editors at the *Enquirer* to kill the story of Travis and his coneheads as a warped prank. But a few weeks later it appeared on the front page. And another space hero was born. —JEFF WELLS