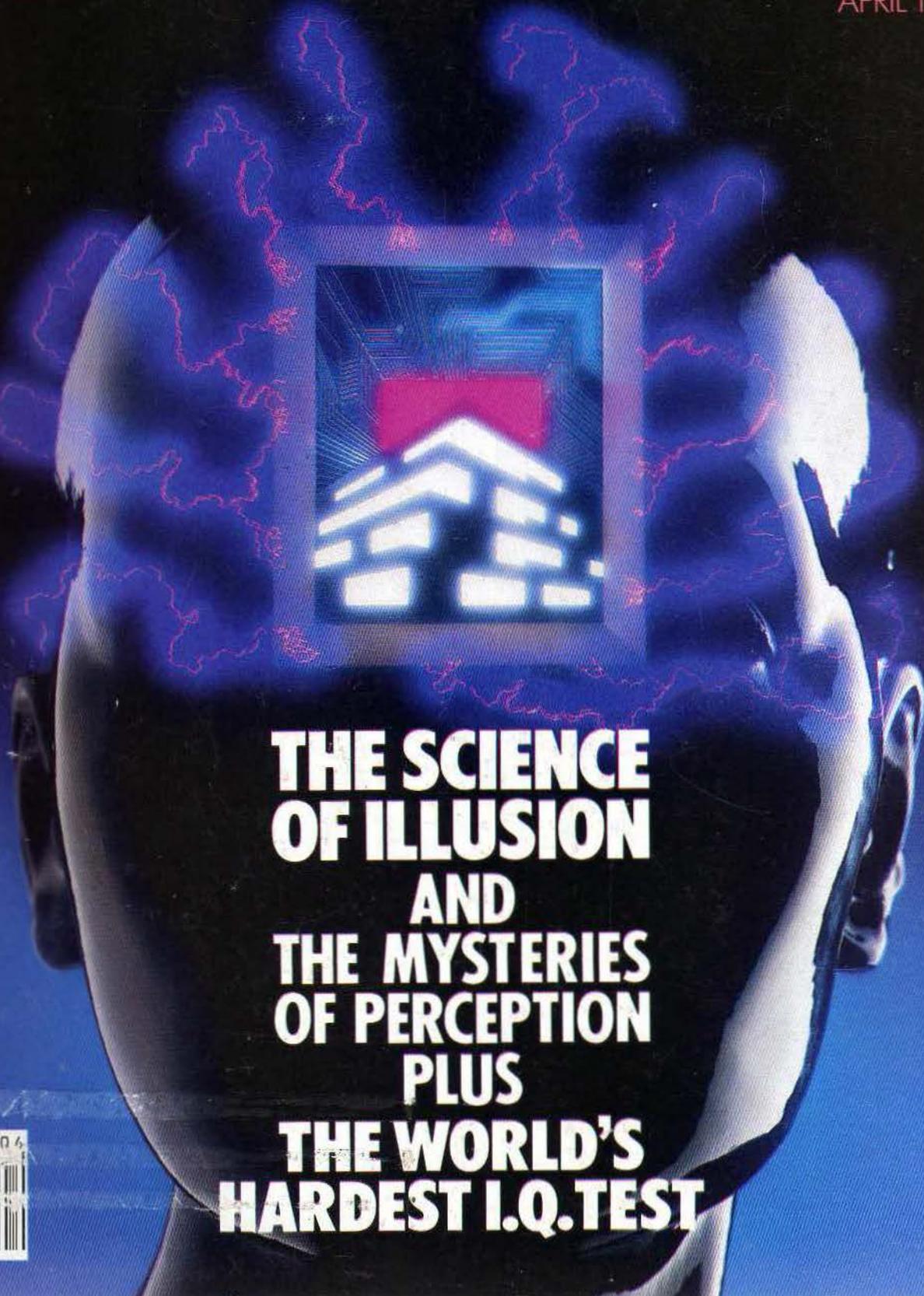


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ANTI MATTER

UFOs, says Ellen Crystall, seem to like her. And after dozens of close encounters over a period of 14 years, she's gotten to like them, too.

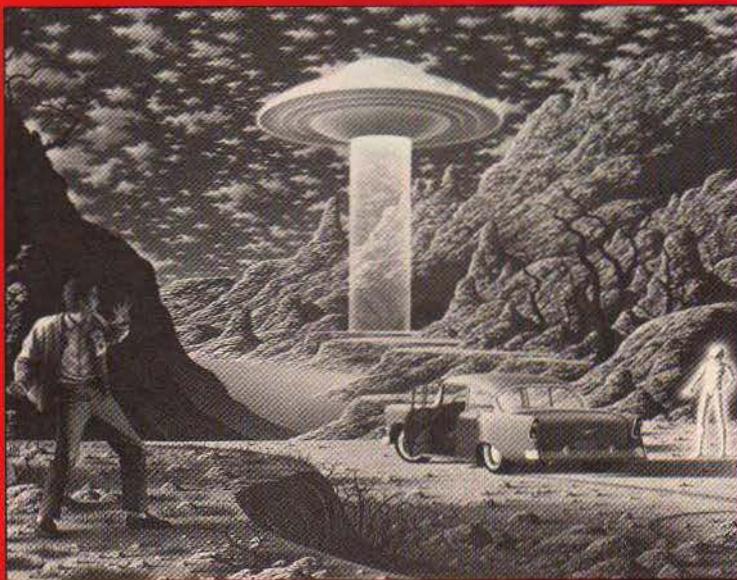
Crystall says she saw her first UFO in 1971, while still a teenager, after her family had moved to California. "Our neighbors talked about UFOs," she recalls, "and after a while I saw them, too. Soon they started coming closer. And within a few months, I was so terrified that I convinced my parents to move back to New Jersey."

When Crystall got back East, though, she continued to see the UFOs. And necessity forced her to assimilate the strange shapes into everyday life. By 1981, in fact, she was searching for alien visitors in rural Pine Bush, New York.

Conducting her investigation with ufologist Harry Lebelson, Crystall spent evening after evening in the field. "We were going to Pine Bush nightly to photograph spaceships landing in farmers' fields," she claims. "In one greatly enlarged picture, I could even make out a group of five aliens that looked like something out of the *Star Wars* bar scene."

The lights vanished from Pine Bush in November 1981, but Crystall often went back to see whether they had returned. Last August, she says, she found them. Since then, "I've taken a lot of people up there, and they've seen the UFOs, too," she reports. "We go running through the fields in the dark, and we've gotten close several times. The UFOs seem to hold their breath until you start to leave. Then lights come on ten feet away and shoot straight up."

According to Crystall, she's had trouble substantiating the



Pine Bush sightings because good photographs are hard to come by. "The aliens seem to control who can take pictures of them," Crystall observes. "One person will get pictures, and another will get nothing. Usually, I get pretty good pictures that look like showers of sparks. I have to have them developed by a custom lab, though. If the picture doesn't show people, a house, or a dog, Fotomat says there's nothing there."

Better equipment might help, she believes. "We're seeing electrical discharges of some sort, and they give off short-wave-

UFO UPDATE

length light that's blocked by the glass of an ordinary lens. With a quartz lens, I might get the spacecraft itself." But a quartz lens costs \$1,500—beyond the budget of a grad-school musician working her way through New York University as a fill-in secretary.

Despite such handicaps, Crystall believes she has gleaned a few original insights into the nature of UFOs. "The metal on these craft seems to be transparent," she says. "They also seem to be able to generate their own cloud formations. One night, we saw vertical streaks forming, with moving lights in them. At the same time, a group about a mile closer heard a loud mechanical screeching. When you photograph them, you don't get what you see. The lights don't show up in the pictures."

The reason for that, notes UFO skeptic Robert Sheaffer, seems clear. "What Crystall calls UFOs others might refer to as dimly lit planes or stars," he says. "The confusion is more common than you might think." —OWEN DAVIES