

OMNII

JUNE 1988

MIND-TRIPPERS
FANTASY ADDICTS
SPEAK OUT

COMPUTERS
WITH A
HEART

LOST WORLD
HIDDEN FOREST
OF MADAGASCAR

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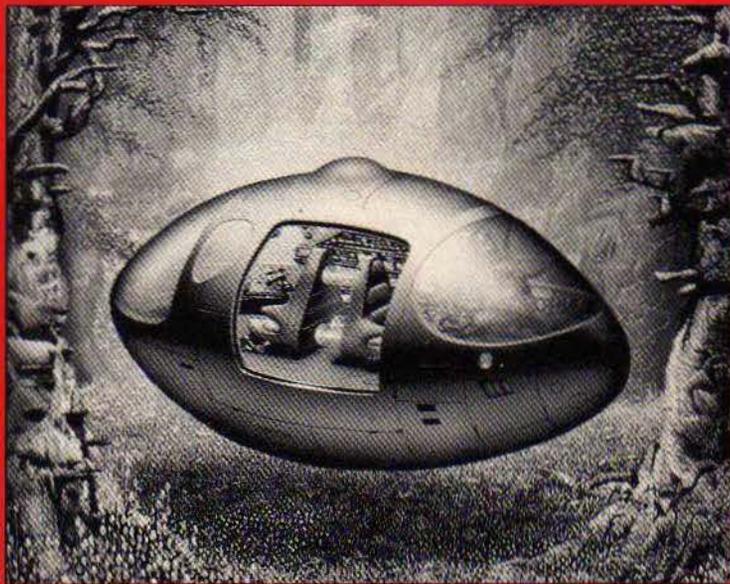
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ANTI MATTER

During the Australian bicentennial, Faya Knowles, forty-eight, and her three sons left their home in Perth for a holiday in Melbourne. Last January 20, at three A.M., the foursome were driving along the Erie Highway near Mundrabilla in the southern Australian desert when they noticed a strange light in the sky. According to front-page newspaper stories published the next day, the brilliant, egg-shaped object terrorized the family for an hour and a half. It descended on their car, hoisted it into the air, then dropped it onto the road. The family scrambled into some roadside bushes and hid until the object departed. Then, after changing a tire and driving to Ceduna, they reported the incident to the police.

The Australians had a field day with the story. One cartoonist depicted the family running from their car as an alien in a UFO shouts, "Racists!" A UFO buff wanted to hypnotize the Knowleses to uncover a possible abduction. Charles Morgan of the Sydney Observatory believed the car had been hit by "a large carbonous meteorite shower." Peter Schwerdtfeger, a professor of meteorology at Flinders University, thought the family had run into a "dry thunderstorm." One fire company took out a full-page ad in *The Australian*. Above a humorous sketch of a UFO lifting the car were the words IF ONLY THEY HAD STUCK WITH DUNLOP.

Meanwhile representatives from Channel 7, a television station in Adelaide, had met the Knowleses and negotiated an exclusive contract for their story. But Keith Basterfield, field investigator for UFO Research—Australia, managed to



UFO UPDATE

Researchers from the Australian Mineral Development Laboratory examined the car for Channel 7 and concluded that the marks on the roof of the car were old and due to normal wear and tear. Basterfield believes the Knowleses told "the truth as they saw it," but he thinks the facts point to a more mundane series of events. The family had been driving nonstop and became mesmerized by a light in the sky. A blowout occurred while Sean was driving. The family heard a thump as the luggage jolted loose. The right rear end of the car struck the ground, and Sean hit the brakes hard. The car vibrated as he tried to pull it off the road. The dogs barked. The Knowleses rolled down their windows and smelled a nasty smoke from the strained front brakes. The frightened family headed for the bushes.

The light remains a mystery, admits Basterfield, but this UFO probably did not pump iron. People make mistakes, just like the ad agency for the tire company. It turns out that the Knowleses' tires were Dunlops.—PATRICK HUYGHE