

SPECIAL SEALED SECTION

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OMNI

NOVEMBER 1991

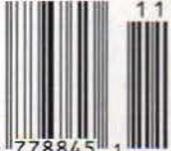
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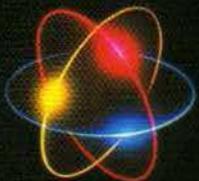
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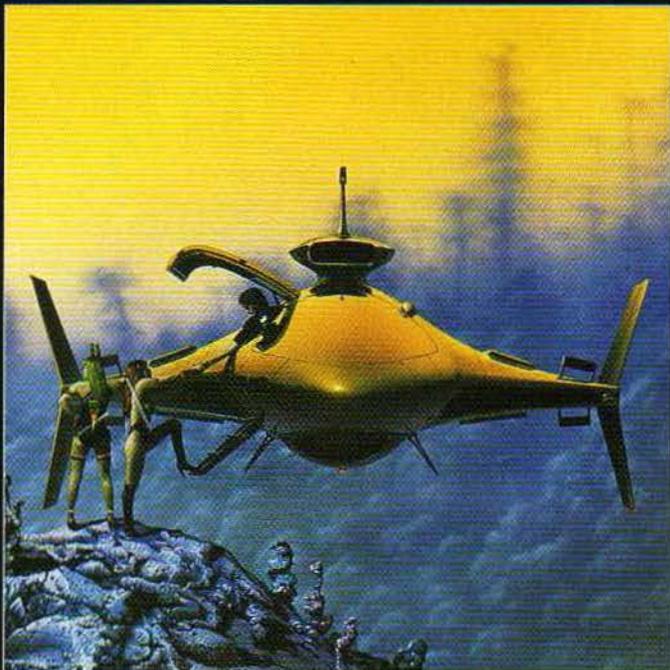
UFO UPDATE:

UFO researchers say their work involves endless stress and deprives their families of time, energy, and love

To the typical UFO buff, the daily life of the UFO researcher seems romantic indeed. According to the common perception, this lucky individual spends days tracking down spectacular sightings and nights hypnotically probing the psyches of alleged UFO abductees. When the researcher comes up for air, moreover, he tweaks the nose of established science and jousts with the government for classified proof of UFOs. What a life!

But the UFOlogists themselves say their profession is costly and stressful, exacting an enormous toll on earning capacity and family life. The pain and pressure of the work, they say, is rarely mentioned on the talk show circuit or in UFO magazines. Stressful career problems, for instance, have plagued investigator Richard Hall, who worked with the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena during the Sixties and Seventies and is now on the board of the Fund for UFO Research. Says Hall, "UFOs on my résumé interfered with me getting straight jobs for years."

UFOlogist David Jacobs, meanwhile, says his work takes so much time it seems "like a bottomless pit." As an abduction expert and a historian at Temple University in Philadelphia, he can't find enough hours in the day for either activity. When push came to shove, Jacobs says, he chose to study abductions. But a senior member of his department at Temple informed him that he would have to go back to regular historical scholarship if he "hoped to advance in his career." His abduction work has also strained his family life, though he feels guilty when he takes a break.



Toronto psychotherapist David Gotlib reports similar strains. Gotlib spends hours providing therapy for abductees and also produces a newsletter for abduction researchers. Between the newsletter and UFO conferences, Gotlib says, he is "out thousands of dollars worth of time." He deals with the pressure by reassessing his commitment to UFOlogy every six months. "I'll close down the newsletter," Gotlib says, "when I get a relationship or get married."

Larry Bryant, head of the Washington, DC, office of Citizens Against UFO Secrecy, says he has literally given up on a social life for the sake of UFOs. Bryant, a Pentagon employee by day, comes home to a world of unanswered phone messages and UFO correspondence. "It's a full-time part-time job," he says. Bryant says he recently received a poor job rating at the Pentagon because of his UFO work. The rating was improved only after he paid a lawyer thousands of dollars and filed a lawsuit.

Finally, artist and abduction expert Budd Hopkins claims the research has deprived his family of "time, energy, and love." But even more disturbing, he says, is a frightening feeling he calls "terminal impotence." This oppressive sensation sets in, he notes, "because there is no way to stop the abductions or ultimately help the abductees."

Given these drawbacks, why do the researchers persist? David Jacobs explains. The work, he insists, is critical because "the abduction phenomenon is the most important thing that has ever occurred."

—PAUL McCARTHY