

# UFO RESEARCH AUSTRALIA

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THE MUNDRABILLA INCIDENT - JANUARY 20TH 1988 REPORT

REPORT EDITION TWO-Compiled 26th Jan 88

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In the early hours of Wednesday morning January 20th 1988 the occupants of a number of vehicles travelling along the main highway between Perth, Western Australia and Adelaide, South Australia were reportedly involved in an incident.

This report has been compiled from a personal interview with the main percipients, the Knowles family, and from the extensive media coverage given to the incidents, especially from taped video interviews which appeared on television. Hence most material is derived from the original source.

It will be some time before an indepth report can be compiled, operating as we have had to do in what can only be described as a media "circus". To indicate the intense media interest in the incident, Ray Brooke fielded almost one hundred queries from local, interstate and overseas radio, television and newspaper sources in the forty eight hours following the breaking of the story.

Compiled on the 26th January in this report we hope to cover as much detail as possible about what is fast becoming known as the Mundrabilla incident.

Members of the investigation team in this case have been Keith Basterfield, Ray Brooke, Steve Bolton, Vladimir and Pony Godic.

## LOCATION

The incident occurred on a stretch of the main bitumised highway between Perth and Adelaide. Between the localities of Madura and Eucla, Western Australia the area is more locally known as The Basin and it is here that the episode reportedly occurred (see maps 1 and 2).

## THE EVENT

As pieced together todate the sequence of events was as follows. Five vehicles were involved. Three were travelling Eastwards (see figure 1) towards Eucla, and two others were on their way Westwards in the direction of Perth. These vehicles were spread over at least a 10-15 kilometre distance and not travelling in a close convoy in either direction.

Vehicle one was a caravan and car, the occupant of which is reported to have almost collided with the Knowles' car when driver Sean Knowle said he took evasive action swerving to avoid a close encounter with the object. The identity of the occupant of this vehicle has not been discovered by anyone todate and in fact this person seems to have been overlooked by the media. On Sean's testimony this driver should have seen the object at close range.

Vehicle two was a truck driven by an unknown (to us) person who was apparently the first person to advise police at Eucla (W.A.) of the incident. We understand that this person made a statement to the Eucla police. However at this stage the police there have declined to release the name. Although details are sketchy it seems that the Eucla police contacted the Ceduna (S.A.) police and advised them that a car had been seen being followed by a light. The Ceduna police then looked for and stopped the Knowles' car and interviewed them.

Vehicle three was a truck being driven by a Mr Graham Henley, 57, transport operator of Forest Hill, Victoria.

Mr Henley was driving his truck through The Basin and later determined he was in fact some 10-15 kilometres ahead of the Knowles' car.

He is reported as saying that through his rear vision mirror he had seen a bright white light hovering over the car's headlights. "It was hovering above The Basin on the sweeping stretch of road...just flickering in and out between the trees." He continued on to the Mundrabilla Motor Hotel where he stopped for a while.

Shortly after he arrived there so did the Knowles family. He related they were in a state of shock and "...even their dogs were cowering in the front seat of the car...The whole car smelt like bakelite or just like as if you'd blown a fuse...A soot was all over the car and there were four dents as though the car had been picked up by a magnet." He is reported to have checked the tread of the burst tyre and looked underneath the car but found no indication it had swerved off the road. "I cannot explain it but all I know is that I saw four very terrified people at 4.45 on Wednesday morning."

Vehicle four was a 1984 blue Ford Telstar car containing the Knowles family from Perth, to whom we shall return later in this report.

Vehicle five was a truck driven by a transport operator whom we

believe to be John De Jonge. This vehicle was at an unknown distance behind the Knowles' car.

It is reported that following the main experience of the Knowles where they stopped to change a tyre, "Porkey" drove past them seeing their vehicle stationary on the side of the road, but did not stop fearing danger from strangers in such a deserted place.

Due to the number of vehicles involved and lack of identification of some drivers, it will be some time before we are able to personally interview all those concerned.

#### THE MAIN PERCIPIENTS

Mrs Faye Knowles, 43 and sons Sean 21, Patrick 24 and Wayne 18, were travelling from Perth, Western Australia to Melbourne, Victoria for a holiday.

At a point West of Mundrabilla, W.A Sean, the driver saw what he at first took to be a truck's light approaching them from the East, apparently along the road. As it approached it then disappeared after "jumping about a bit". It became visible again and continued to approach their vehicle. Sean commented that it looked like a "spaceship". It became brighter and bigger. They kept driving towards it. It then disappeared.

The next thing they knew it was behind them. Sean accelerated the car in an attempt to get away from it. Suddenly it was in front again.

At some stage Sean did a U-turn and travelled Westwards for a while, then did another U-turn to resume the original Eastwards travel. It is not clear whether this was an attempt to elude or follow the light.

At another time Sean commented that the light was seen close to their vehicle and they swerved to miss it and nearly hit a car and caravan coming the other way.

The exact sequence of events from here is very confused. It included:

- The rear right tyre blowing out whilst they were travelling at speed. Sean braked the car to a halt.
- Mrs Knowles placing her hand on the car's roof and feeling a "spongy substance.". Mrs Knowles told us she was sitting in the rear passenger seat behind the driver nearest the centre of the road. (Vehicles are driven on the left hand side of the road in Australia). She stated she wound down her window and placed her right hand on the roof. She had retracted it after feeling some material present on the roof. Immediately the back of her hand felt warm for a few seconds, then the sensation of heat faded.
- The family winding down the windows and a "greyish-black mist" coming into the car.
- The sound of their voices changing in pitch and appearing to slow down.
- Them believing that the object had landed on the roof. When

questioned they said they did not see anything approach and land on the roof, nor did they see anything protruding front, rear or over the sides of the roof.

-A humming sound was heard.

-Sean blacking out for a period.

-Them all becoming hysterical, shouting and crying. Mrs Knowles said she believed they were going to die.

-Them believing the car was lifted off the road. However when asked if they looked out of the windows and saw the car off the ground, they had not done so.

-Them saying that the vehicle was dropped to the ground and the tyre burst.

-Their two dogs going "crazy".

-A smell like "dead bodies" in the air.

It should be emphasised that the exact sequence of the above events is still to be obtained from the family.

After a period of time Sean stopped the car and they all got out to hide in adjacent scrub. They reported that the light/object remained in the vicinity of the car and then departed. Some fifteen minutes after stopping they returned to the car and rapidly changed the tyre. From that point (believed to be some 40 kilometres West of Mundrabilla) they drove to the Mundrabilla Motor Hotel (W.A.)

#### INVESTIGATION BY US

The story broke to us about 2.30 p.m. on Wednesday 20th January some ten hours after it occurred. The Ceduna police telephoned Ray Brooke whilst the Knowles were present at the station. Arrangements were made for the family to proceed to Adelaide where they would be interviewed and arrangements made to inspect the vehicle, documenting the physical evidence. Ceduna police advised us they had secured written statements and a sample of the "soot" for analysis. Nothing else could be done by UFOR(SA) until family and vehicle arrived in Adelaide.

The story leaked to the media however, and the family were intercepted enroute and concluded a deal with the Channel 7 television network. It appeared at this stage that "cheque book" journalism had scored over scientific evaluation.

On Thursday 21st January after negotiations with the 7 network, the authors were able to spend three hours at the Adelaide channel 7 studios whilst the Knowles underwent extensive interviews. Between interviews we managed to talk informally to all members of the family. No formal indepth interview was possible in the circumstances. We confirmed their basic story as related above.

The family was distressed and tired at this stage and told us they wanted a finish to all the television interviews.

They appeared to us to be down to earth people trying to cope with some traumatic episode. Indications of a hoax were minimal.

Following the end of the interviews at the station we sought our

own formal indepth interview. However the family declined and then left for an undisclosed location.

As the station had the vehicle hidden away and with the Knowles family not available to us further, we awaited further developments, although we did indicate to the station the direction we felt evaluation of the vehicle should take.

#### THE PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

A sample of the "soot/ash" reported to have been found on and in the car was collected some ten hours after the event by a South Australian police forensic squad officer who coincidentally happened to be in Ceduna at the time, on another unrelated matter. The sample was returned to Adelaide for analysis. Results of the analysis are still awaited. UFOR(SA) was unable to secure an independent sample due to police procedures and the action taken by the channel 7 network.

Results of these police tests will no doubt spread to the international UFO community from media sources, faster than we can relay them. However, we will pursue a copy of the detailed findings when they are to hand.

At the date of this report the car itself is believed to be held at Wudinna(S.A.) by the television station. We have sighted video pictures of both it and the burst tyre. The video indicates four indentations on the roof of the vehicle virtually at the four corner points. However as the family had two suitcases strapped to the roof in some as yet unknown fashion (no roof rack according to them) which were lost in the event, these marks may just be related to these being ripped off at high speed and not be UFO related. We await detailed technical reports on these marks.

The tyre which burst is likewise not available for our inspection.

On the 25th January Channel 7 announced that its experts said "...analysis of black material on the car reveals that it is mostly iron oxide consistent with residue from worn brake linings", and they say the almost perfect cut on the right rear tyre was probably caused by running a considerable distance on the rim. Shaking and smoke could likewise be explained under this hypothesis they said.

Depending on the exact sequence of events, the tyre exploding might account for Mrs Knowles' sensation when she reached onto the roof and touched something there. When we examined her hand on 21st January no abnormality was evident and she suffered no long lasting effects. An encounter with a piece of hot rubber from the blown rear tyre might fit the details she gave.

We must emphasise that the physical evidence is not as strong as the media have reported and caution is urged until technical reports are in.

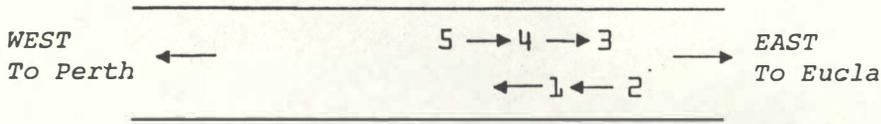
#### CONCLUSION

At this date we are of the opinion that the entire incident is still open to a number of interpretations.

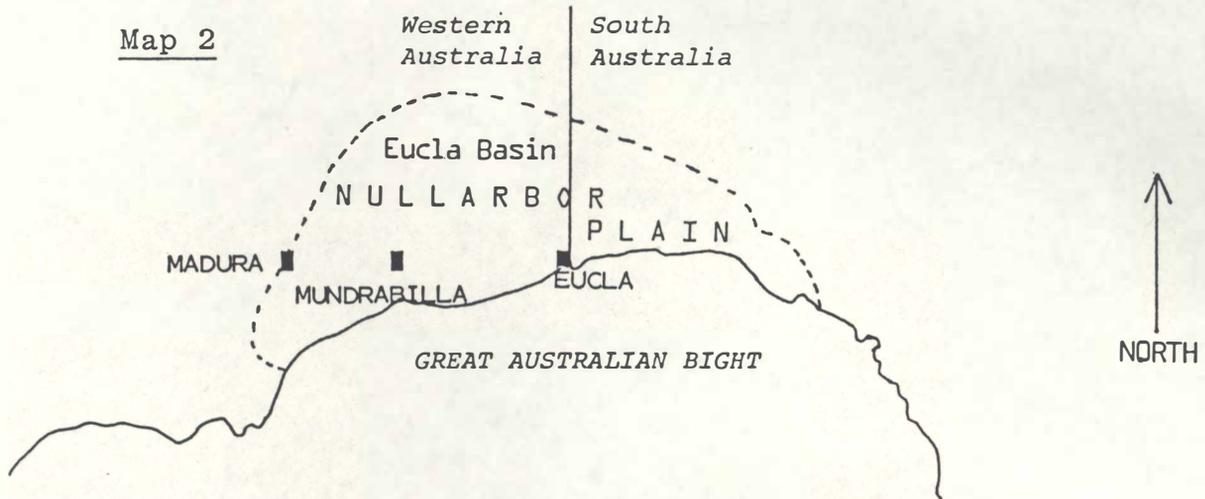
AUSTRALIA - Map 1



FIGURE 1 (vehicles)



Map 2



## UFO terrorises Perth family on Nullarbor Plain

ADELAIDE (AAP) — A Perth family claim they were terrorised by a UFO which plucked their car from the road as they crossed the Nullarbor Plain early yesterday morning.

Police said they were taking the family's story seriously after investigating damage to the car, which was covered in an ash-type substance.

A truck and car driver also witnessed the bizarre event after being chased by the UFO along the Eyre Highway just inside the West Australian border.

Faye Knowles and her three sons — Patrick, 24, Sean, 21, and Wayne, 18 — were about 40 km west

of Mundrabilla driving towards South Australia when they first saw the glowing object about 2.45 am (Qld time) yesterday.

They told police they watched as it chased the truck and car, which were travelling in the opposite direction, before turning and landing on their own vehicle.

Mrs Knowles told police the UFO turned their car around and placed it back on the road facing in the opposite direction.

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# Police probe Nullarbor UFO 'attack'

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"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 tyres was blown," said a police spokesman.

"While this was happening the family said their voices were distorted and it was as if they were talking in slow motion."

Once they were back on the tarmac, the family jumped out and fled into the bush where they hid for some time before going back and changing the wheel.

They drove to Ceduna in the far west of South Australia and reported the incident to local police.

By chance, crime scene investigators from Port Lincoln were in Ceduna and examined the car.

"We have to take it seriously, there's no reason why we shouldn't," said Sgt Fred Longley of Ceduna police.

"There were too many witnesses for us not to.

"The car was damaged and was covered in ash from the object and they were clearly shaken up."

Sgt Longley said the Knowles drew a diagram of the UFO which looked like an egg in an egg cup.

Last night Mrs Knowles and her sons were driving to Adelaide for a meeting with Ray Brooke of the UFO Research Centre.

21-1-88 - "LARRNS BOST"

# Smell of bodies filled UFO car

MELBOURNE (AAP) —

The inside of a car filled up with smoke which smelt of dead bodies when it was picked up by a UFO, a Perth family who claim to have been violently attacked in the middle of the Nullarbor Plain said last night.

Faye Knowles and her adult sons Patrick, Wayne and Sean said on Channel 7 they feared for their lives as they struggled to shake off the UFO while they drove along the Eyre Highway in Western Australia near the South Australian border.

The nightmare started when the family, who were all awake, spotted strange lights in front of them at about 3 am (AEST). They said they saw a glowing object which resembled a giant egg in an egg cup. The UFO flew above their car, landed on the roof and picked it up.

Patrick, 24, said the UFO seemed to grab the car. "The car started to smoke up and it felt like something was on the car," he said. "The dogs in the car started to go crazy. "We wound down the windows and the car started to smoke up inside."

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# 'Dogs went crazy' during UFO attack

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Asked what the smoke smelt like, he said: "Like dead bodies or something."

The UFO shook the car violently and forced it back down on the road with such pressure that the right, rear tyre was blown.

"We got out of the car and we hid behind a little tree in the bushes and it couldn't find us," Mrs Knowles said.

She said the family hid in the bushes for about 15 minutes then frantically changed the flat tyre in about two minutes.

"When we hopped into the car to take off again, it came after us again," she said. "It wouldn't leave us alone."

The family said several trucks

passed them during the ordeal, but none would stop.

Meanwhile, a second tuna boat crew yesterday reported sighting a UFO in the Great Australian Bight, a week before Wednesday's sightings of a similar object at sea and over the Nullarbor Plain.

Police at Port Lincoln, on South Australia's west coast,

said the report by a tuna boat crew followed yesterday's report by another crew that it had also seen the object.

Chief Insp. Barry Willoughby said he could not confirm whether the sightings were linked with the bizarre story of a Perth family who claimed to have been terrorised by a UFO on the Nullarbor Plain.

Both boats had reported a "bright, white light" in the Great Australian Bight between Esperance and Ceduna.

An Adelaide spokesman for UFO Research Incorporated, an international organisation which records sightings of unidentified flying objects, said if the Knowles story was confirmed it would be the first of its kind in Australia.