

UFO photographs from Uruguay

Walter Fernandez Luna

Translated by Gordon Creighton

Photograph 1



URUGUAY'S history of UFO sightings only began during the 1950s, when a few sporadic observations were reported here and there throughout the Republic. The indifference of both the press and the public in general was total. Our incipient scientific community, always faithful to their undoubted principles, insisted on denying the unquestionable reality of what was happening before their undaunted and unbelieving eyes.

The time came in due course, however, when it was no longer possible to treat the witnesses of these happenings as madmen, fantasists or tricksters, because individuals of recognised ethical standing and even with university degrees were beginning to publish their experiences. And, as if this were not enough, the "non-existent" UFOs now began to permit themselves to be captured by the camera, sometimes with absolute clarity and wealth of detail.

As was only to be expected, some of the members of our erudite circles lost no time in hurling accusations and challenges around, arguing that the photographs were simple hoaxes, paying no further heed to the matter of the status of those who had taken them, and without troubling to establish any convincing motives that might have given rise to the perpetration of such hoaxes.

One of the most controversial of these Uruguayan cases is unquestionably the affair of the UFO allegedly photographed over the beach at Playa Sangrilá.

The witness, Sr. Yamandú López (Photo 1), is a highly respected jeweller, a family man with a wife and five children. On September 23, 1968, he and the family were enjoying a well-earned rest in a little summer chalet owned by him.

It was 6.30 p.m., and Sr. López was making his way down to the beach with three of his sons, José, Rosario, and Fernando, aged at the time 13, 11, and 8 years respectively. He had his camera with him, his intention being to take a photograph of the three boys. The day was a fairly cloudy one and consequently not very propitious for this type of picture, but his roll of film was nearly finished and he wanted to use it up.

He was just getting the camera ready, while the boys were running around on the sands, when he suddenly began to hear an unusual humming noise. Looking up, he beheld a strange object which was climbing rapidly in the sky. According to his statement, the object appeared to be metallic and circular, the under part silvery-coloured while the upper portion, which had a protuberance shaped like a cupola, was dark.

As soon as he had recovered from his initial astonishment, Sr. López had enough presence of mind to raise his camera and press the button before the object vanished in the distance. He secured the sequence of two photographs shown here. (Photos Nos. 2 and 3. Please note that the photo on the cover is an enlargement of No. 3—EDITOR.)

I am a professional photographer myself and therefore in a position to make a technical analysis of the negatives, and this I have done.

The first point to be established was whether there could be any question of double exposure or any other sort of laboratory trick. In order to do this, I secured possession of the negatives for almost a year and at this point it should be emphasised that the witness raised no objection of any kind and was not upset when I

Photograph 2

explained to him the type of study that I proposed to carry out on them. I thought that it was best to put all my cards on the table while at the same time observing the reaction of the witness. He remained quite imperturbable, and told me that I could keep them as long as should be necessary.

Of the authenticity of the photographs I had had no doubt right from the outset. Nevertheless, with a view to obtaining the greatest possible degree of objectivity, it occurred to me that it would be right to call upon the aid of other experts in the photographic field. Those who took part in the analysis were a Kodak Company executive named Swichman, and two photographers belonging to the American Embassy in Uruguay, whose names I omit here for obvious reasons.

In August 1969 I was in Buenos Aires (Argentina) for some time, and I showed the negatives to several colleagues on whom I went to call. These were the photographer of the review *2001*, the writer and investigator Eduardo Azcué, and, finally, Mr. Martin McReynolds, head of the UPI (United Press International) office in Buenos Aires. (The last-named would express no opinion as to the existence or non-existence of UFOs). All of them agreed however that the photographs were not faked.

Such a result was indeed to have been expected. Señor Yamandú López is a person who is held in very high regard. He is aged 43, and has spent a large part of his life in making for himself a position of prestige in the professional field in which he is active, and it would consequently be totally illogical even to think of the possibility that he might have perpetrated a hoax. The photos had been taken by him in 1968, and we had first learnt of their existence towards the beginning of 1969. Throughout the whole of this period the witness had maintained a complete silence on the subject and, what is more important, had sought no kind of publicity whatsoever. And, finally, a man of his degree of education and refinement would never have involved three innocent children in such a piece of deception if that was what it had been.

When we have reached this point, it seems to me that we have no way out but to accept the veracity of the episode. Nevertheless, we have still not yet completed the analysis of the case. A number of details remain to be established: we hope, for example, to find a way of estimating the distance, size, and height of the object, in spite of the fact that the photos are almost entirely lacking in any points of reference that might permit us to make calculation. I will convey the results of any deliberation in due course.



Photograph 3

THE OPINION OF MR. PERCY HENNELL ON THE PLAYA SANGRILÁ PHOTOGRAPHS

I TOOK these prints to Mr. Percy Hennell on August 25, 1971, and he subjected them to prolonged study and scrutiny, including examination with a powerful glass.

Although the original negatives (not sent to us by Sr. Walter Fernández Luna) are evidently in a very poor and scratched condition through much unskilful handling, Mr. Hennell stated most emphatically that in his view there is no question of the prints not being genuine photographs of some unknown airborne object, and that he can find absolutely no sign whatever of faking or tampering.

In his professional opinion, the dark object shown cannot have been at a distance of less than 100 yards from the camera—and might have been up to 150 yards. And he states that all the technical details furnished in Sr. Luna's article above* are fully consistent with the story as told and consistent with the photos now produced, and would therefore appear to be correct.

As Mr. Hennell reminded me, he expressed the view

last year that, as time went by, we would gradually accumulate quite a stock of poor, out-of-focus amateurish (as is only natural) but seemingly genuine pictures of this particular "classic" type of disc which appears "domed" or "hat-shaped" in profile. Not one of these pictures might be good enough to be conclusive, and yet, with time, and given enough of them, as in this particular case at Sangrilá, we would end up by having a pretty good idea of some of the external features of this particular type of object, for some would inevitably be slightly clearer on one feature and some slightly clearer on another. All these pieces of evidence would mount up and would constitute very strong testimony that, among the objects described as "UFOs", there is at least one type that consistently displays the domed, hat-shaped form.

GORDON CREIGHTON.

* A discourse, with technical details, has been held back as I wish to obtain checks on the calculations involved—EDITOR.

A widely-reported "UFO"

Omar Fowler

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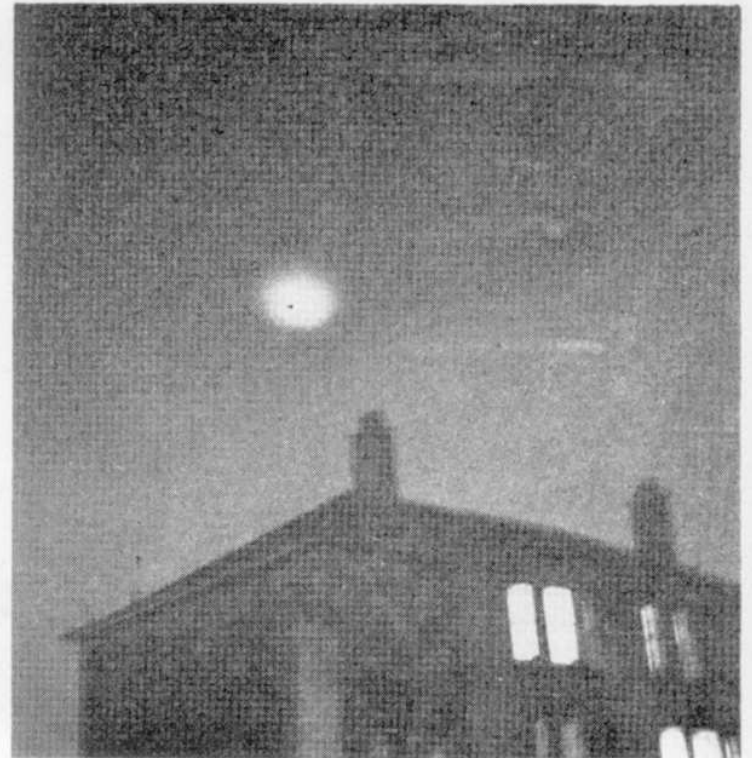
THE cloud of light widely reported throughout the U.K. on the night of September 7, 1971, has now definitely been identified as a Barium Thermite Cloud.

The launching rocket, a *Petrel*, was fired from South Uist and was observed by a BUFORA member at Glasgow climbing skyward. The exact time of the cloud formation was timed at 21.16 by Duncan Hogg, who also obtained a series of excellent photographs of the high altitude cloud, after the rocket had fired the experiment.

The cloud formed as a globe in the first instance, with a whitish blue colour. The size of the cloud was given as having a diameter of $1\frac{1}{2}^\circ$ and observed at an angle of 35° in the North-West, later reported as moving North-West at an elevation of 30° and changing shape to that of a Rugby football and fading finally at approximately 21.50.

The Glasgow Weather Centre gave out the story that the cloud was a high altitude weather experiment conducted by the Sussex University. This statement was not supported by the Weather Centre at Bracknell who commented that no weather rockets had been fired since last Winter. The Sussex University denied that they were responsible, as also did Surrey University at Guildford, as they were not currently carrying out this type of experiment.

It did appear at one stage that the Ministry of Defence were involved, and this fact was later confirmed when it was found that the experiment was



being carried out by a Government Research Establishment. The Rocket reached a height of 80km. and fired a barium Thermite Experiment.