

UFO HIGH OVER HAMBURG

Remarkable sighting and photographs from Lufthansa jetliner

Yusuke J. Matsumura

Our contributor is Director of CBA International, Naka P.O. Box 12, Yokohama, Japan. This item was prepared exclusively for Flying Saucer Review.

AFTER a business trip to Bulgaria and Hungary, I was due to fly home to Japan on January 4, 1973. My booking was for Lufthansa flight No. LH656 from Hamburg, bound for Tokyo via the North Pole.

As it turned out, there was dense fog at Hamburg, and flight No. LH656 was unable to call there as scheduled, and was rearranged to fly direct to Tokyo from Frankfurt-am-Main. A special flight was laid on to take passengers to Frankfurt, and this left Hamburg airport at 12.52 p.m. The 'plane was a Boeing 737 "City" jet.

The 737 climbed swiftly through the bank of fog and clouds, and when it emerged into clear sky, I saw what was apparently a disc-shaped UFO, sharply outlined against the orange sky which had the appearance of a sunset. The UFO banked slowly in the "9 o'clock" direction to the left (port side) of the air liner.

While the airplane was rolling and pitching in the "bumpy" weather, I took two colour photographs in quick succession, but the moment the shutter was pressed [*presumably the second time—ED.*] the object went out of sight. However, there was another witness known to me, a German stewardess, who was sitting just behind my seat, who was talking to me. She told me that she saw a similar object over the North Sea towards the end of 1972. She was in good cheer and asked me to send her copies of the pictures.

The prints used here are black and white, reversed from the colour photos. The photos A1 and B2 are enlargements of the object 300X. The camera used was a Canon FTb, FD 50mm, f1.4 s.s.c. lens with skylight filter, diaphragm f8, shutter speed 1/250th second; film, Kodak Kodacolor.

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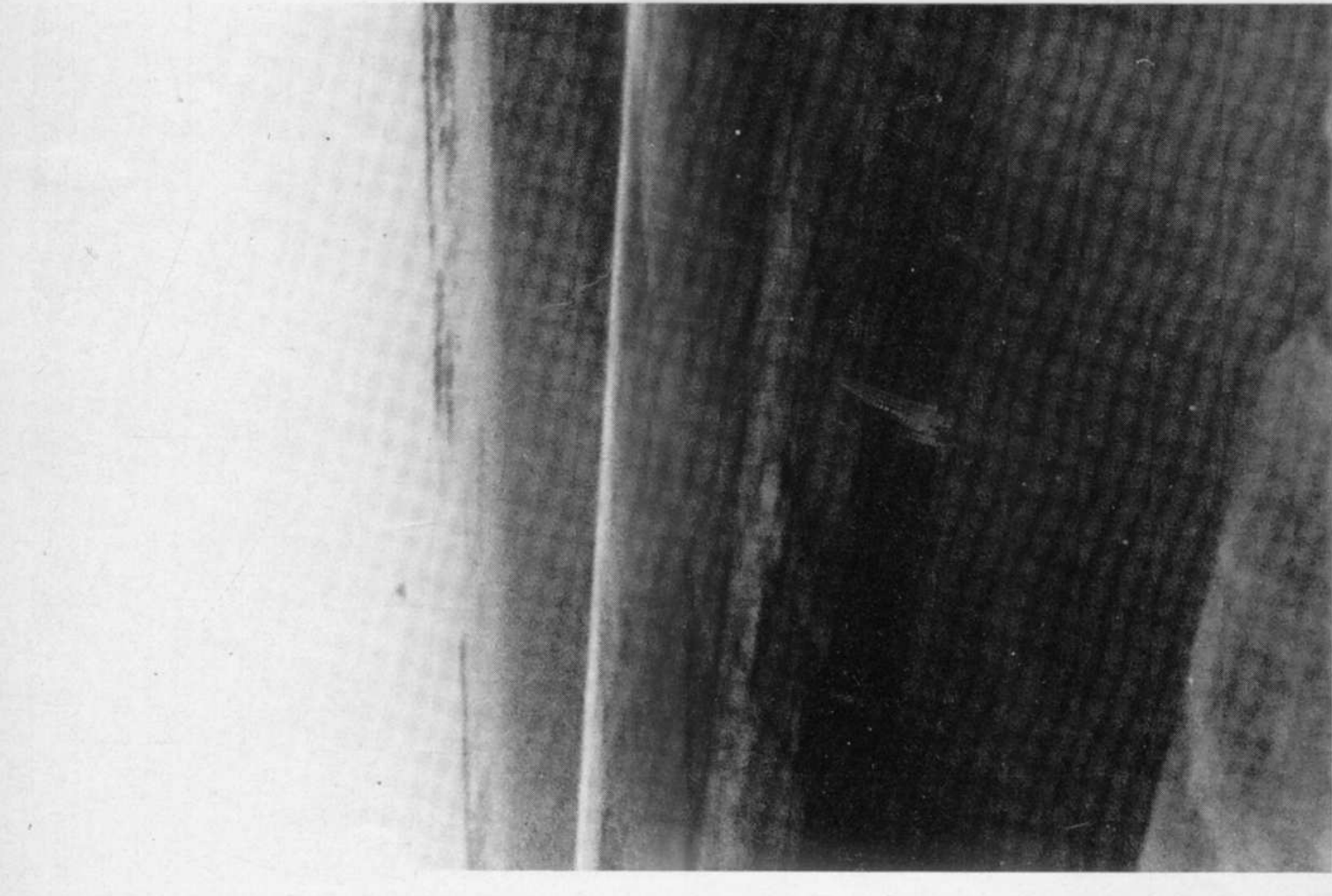
Editor's comment: What very interesting photographs.

One needs always to be wary of UFO photographs; too many fingers have been burned in the past. No doubt someone will profer a ready explanation, but it will be difficult.

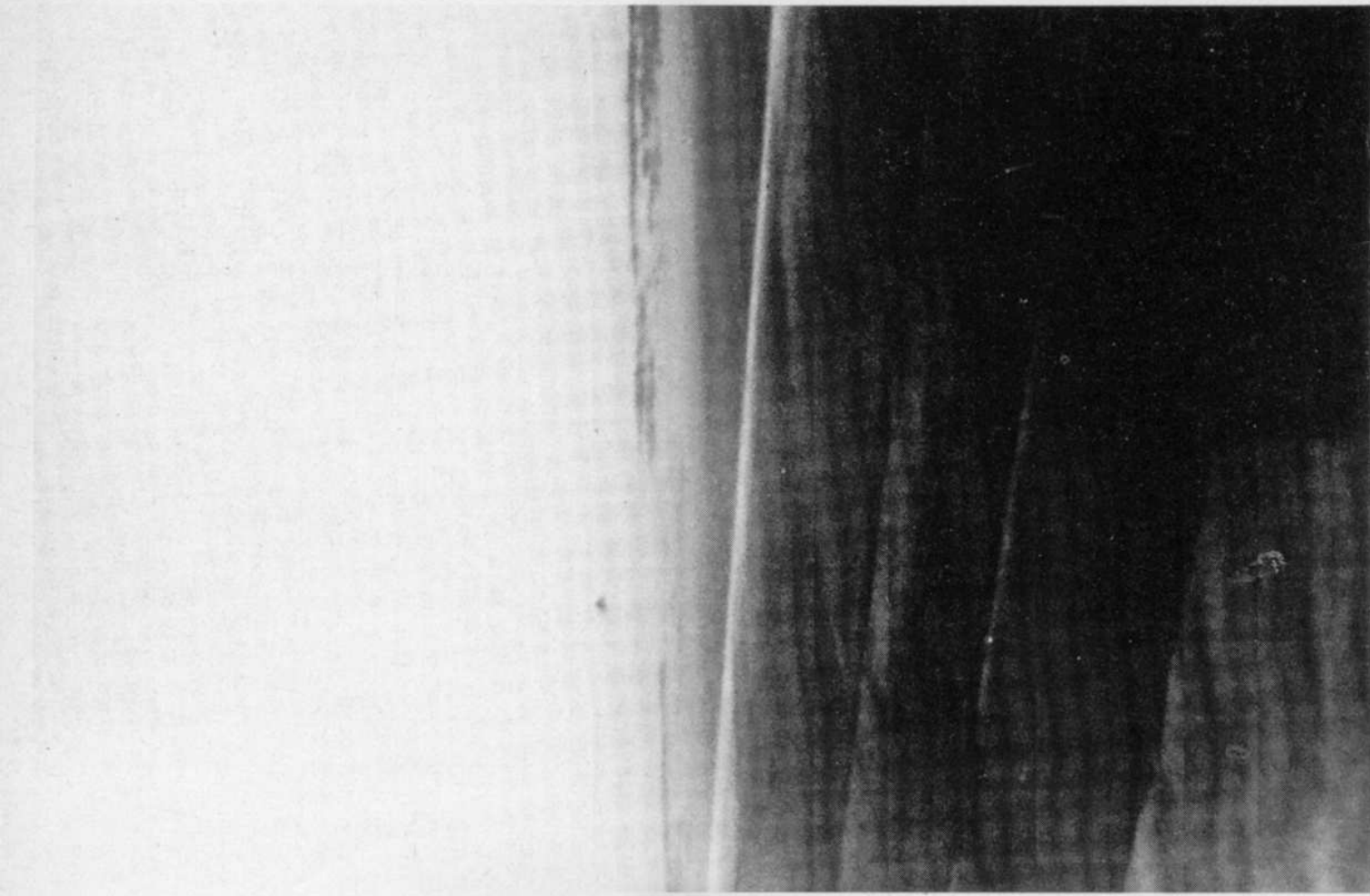
For one thing, the photographer snapped neither,

Right: Black and white enlargement of a section of Mr. Matsumura's second photograph

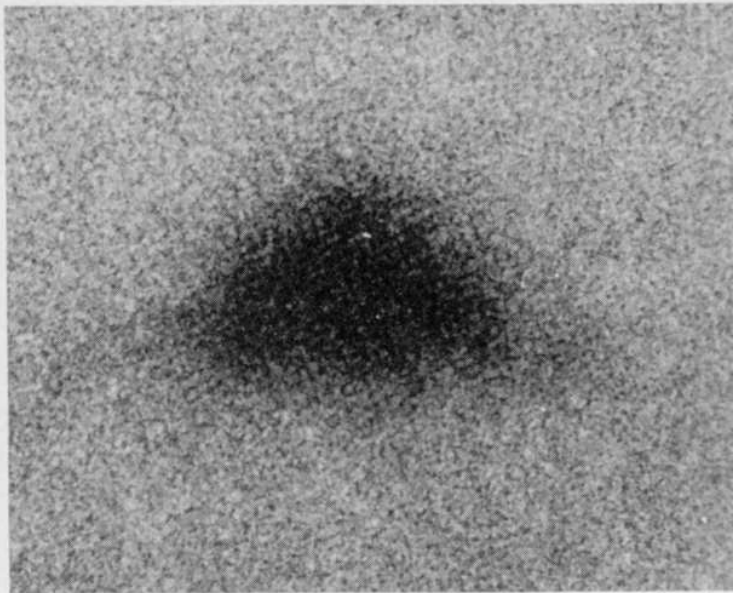




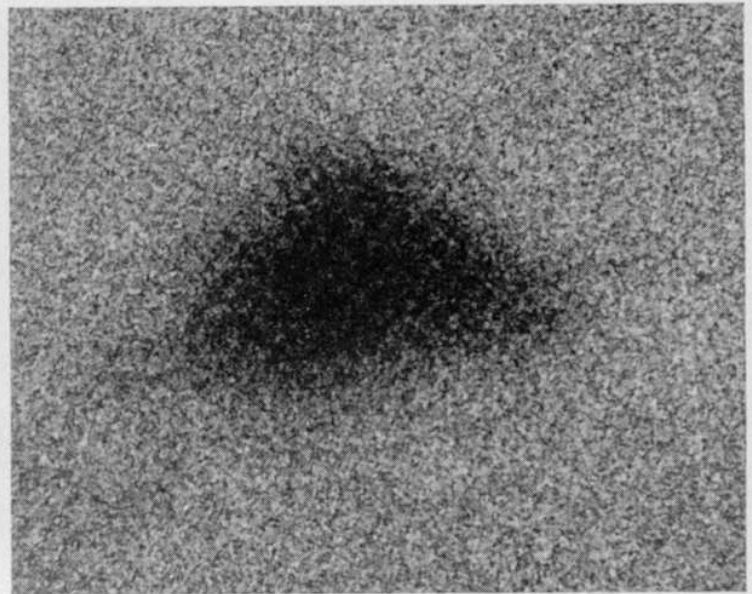
Black and white enlargement from photo No 1



Black and white enlargement from photo No 2



A1: Enlargement of object in first picture x 300



B2: Enlargement of object in second picture x 300

for example, a hub cap hurled out of the aircraft, nor a dustbin lid flung aloft by an accomplice.

Again the object does not appear to fall into the realm of lens flares, and anyway, Mr. Matsumura and the stewardess watched the object, which should also disqualify any suggestion that it was dust on the lens. Furthermore, he took the pictures because he saw the object outside the window.

Was it a balloon? Possibly, but hardly likely, as the presence of a stray balloon would almost certainly have been known, through radar, to ground control. It goes without saying that no airliner would be

permitted to take off with such a hazard close to the flight path, and in foggy conditions. Again, it must be borne in mind that it was reported to have gone quickly out of sight.

Was it the image of an aerofoil distorted by the curvature of the aircraft window? Close inspection of the position and size of the object with relation to the wing of the aircraft seems to rule out this idea.

So what was it that Mr. Matsumura photographed? Apart from ourselves, dear reader, there are many others who would like to know the *real* answer to that question.

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