Stop the Murdoch (Flt 93) Memorial Blogburst: It points to the Vatican

Description

Flight 93 blogburst logo: It points to Mecca! Lizard link: Push it!

Dr. Daniel Griffith (Ã¢â‚¬Â•anything can point to Mecca, because the earth is roundÃ¢â‚¬Å“) is still trying to convince the press that the Flight 93 crescent does not point to Mecca. In an email to the Park Service and the press this week, he tried to make it sound as if Alec Rawls is calculating the orientation of the crescent by using techniques that can be manipulated to achieve any desired result:

> Based on AlecÃ¢â‚¬â„¢s arguments, one could claim that the memorial is oriented toward the Vatican.

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The Flight 93 crescent can indeed be seen as pointing to the Vatican, for the simple reason that the Vatican sits on the great circle line between the crash site and Mecca.

This is what Griffith represents as some concocted method for calculating the orientation of the crescent: the great circle method!

This Ã¢â‚¬Å“shortest distanceÃ¢â‚¬Â• or Ã¢â‚¬Å“straight lineÃ¢â‚¬Â• direction to Mecca (curving only in the over the horizon direction) is the relevant direction because this is the way that *Muslims* calculate the direction to Mecca. (There was a debate about it in the 1980Ã¢â‚¬â„¢s and 90Ã¢â‚¬â„¢s, largely settled by this nondescript looking analysis.)

Here is the great circle line from the Flight 93 crash-site to Mecca:

Crash-site to Kaaba30%

(Click-pic for larger image. Great circle calculator here.)

Here is the great circle line from the crash-site to the Vatican:

Crash-site to Vatican35%

This calculator rounds to the nearest degree, so Mecca and the Vatican both are presented as lying on the great circle line that, from the crash site, proceeds 55Ã‚Â° clockwise from north.

Of course a person who faces Mecca is also facing everything else that happens to lie in the direction of Mecca. When Griffith acknowledges that the crescent points to the Vatican, he is not debunking of the Mecca-orientation of the Flight 93 crescent, but confirming it.

Reductio ad Hitlerum

Griffith pulled the same trick last July, telling reporter Kirk Swauger of the Johnstown *Tribune Democrat* that the crescent can be seen as pointing to a Nazi concentration camp if you want:

> Griffith said Rawls suggested memorial organizers would be outraged if the crescent pointed to a Nazi concentration camp instead, the professor said it actually could be done.

Of course Rawls never suggested that anyone should care if the crescent pointed at a concentration camp. Is there a worldwide religion of facing Nazi concentration camps for prayer? Was Flight 93 hijacked by people who face Nazi concentration camps for prayer?

An unpublished report that Griffith wrote for the Pittsburgh *Tribune Review* in 2006 clarifies his concentration camp reference. It notes that there was a Nazi concentration camp (Drancy) located just outside of Paris, which as you can see on the maps above is also (like the Vatican) on the great circle line between the Flight 93 crash-site and Mecca. In his 2006 report, Griffith acknowledges that the crescent points to the Drancy camp, yet is still unwilling to acknowledge that it points to Mecca. Somehow, the crescent points to everything on the line to Mecca *except* Mecca.

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When Griffith told Swauger that you can see the crescent as pointing to a Nazi concentration camp if you want, he was clearly trying to mislead Swauger into thinking that you can see the crescent as pointing *wherever* you want. This dishonest intention was made clear by another statement that Griffith made to Swauger (not reported by Swauger, but related by Swauger to Alec Rawls at the time). Griffith told Swauger that: Ã¢â‚¬Å“You can face anywhere to face Mecca.Ã¢â‚¬Â•

He is doing the same thing when he tells the Park Service now that the crescent can be seen as pointing to the Vatican, without being clear that this is because the Vatican sits on great circle line to Mecca.

Pecksniff

In his email, Griffith complains that Rawls has been trying to bully him into changing his analysis. Nobody is trying to bully Griffith into changing anything. We are trying to expose him as a fraud.

Griffith is practically in tears about being called a Pecksniff (a character from Martin Chuzzlewit Ã¢â‚¬Å“who lies and cants whether he is drunk or soberÃ¢â‚¬Â•). It is the perfect epithet. Look in the dictionary under Pecksniff and you will see Daniel GriffithÃ¢â‚¬â„¢s picture.

Not that anyone should bother to read GriffithÃ¢â‚¬â„¢s email, but if anyone wants to, it puts front and center another astounding example of GriffithÃ¢â‚¬â„¢s free-form dishonesty.

Griffith quotes RawlsÃ¢â‚¬â„¢s January 2006 report to the Memorial Project as saying that:

> Ã¢â‚¬Â¦the orientation to Mecca Ã¢â‚¬Å“take[s] a short cut over the North Pole Ã¢â‚¬Â¦ even though Mecca is south of Shanksville.Ã¢â‚¬Â•

From this supposed quote, Griffith goes on to construct an elaborate fantasy about how, since the great circle line between the crash-site and Mecca does *not* actually go over the North Pole, it was really Rawls, not he, who started this idea that you can face different directions to face Mecca.

But RawlsÃ¢â‚¬â„¢s report to the Memorial Project did *not* say that a person facing the north pole from the crash site is facing Mecca. Rather, it includes an aside explaining why the shortest-distance line to Mecca Ã¢â‚¬Å“points in a northeasterly directionÃ¢â‚¬Â• (not due north), even though Mecca is south of Shanksville. The reason is because both are in the northern hemisphere. To illustrate, the report includes the simplest possible example: Ã¢â‚¬Å“The shortest distance between points on the opposite sides of the northern hemisphere will take a short cut over the North Pole.Ã¢â‚¬Â•

Griffith quotes only the second half of this sentence, omitting the part about connecting points Ã¢â‚¬Å“on the opposite sides of the northern hemisphere.Ã¢â‚¬Â• That allows him to pretend that the points referred to are the crash-site and Mecca. Of course Shanksville and Mecca are *not* on opposite sides of the hemisphere. Mecca is about 2/3rds of the way around the hemisphere from the crash-site.

Having Misrepresented Rawls as saying, not just that a person facing into the giant crescent is facing Mecca, but also that a person facing due north from the crash site is facing Mecca, Griffith then writes:

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> I fail to be convinced that only 2, rather than the infinity of possible, arcs are acceptable to Muslims.

Bwahahahaha! Griffith just finished saying how wrong it is to think that a person facing north from Shanksville is facing Mecca. Then he turns around and uses this face-north-to-face-Mecca claim (misattributed to Rawls) as justification for saying that a person facing *any* direction is facing Mecca. Just how much *peck* has this idiot been sniffing?

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