

MadCow Morning News*investigative reporting into drug trafficking, 9/11, and state-sponsored crime***The Vanishing: Christian Cult's Airport Disappears**Posted on [March 21, 2014](#) by [Daniel Hopsicker](#)[Share via email](#) [Share](#)

“Law enforcement always follows the drugs, because that leads to drug thugs no one cares about,” according to one former Federal official familiar with the case. “Following the money, which is much more effective, is discouraged, because it leads to the suits—bankers, politicians, law enforcement types—people with social and political clout.”



Douglas McClain Sr, charged with financial fraud against the elderly after allegedly swindling \$200,000 from an 74-year old paraplegic, befriending his victim by acting as if he were a Christian minister, instead of a [sociopathic con man](#), showed up in court for the first time Tuesday in San Antonio for a pre-trial hearing, appearing unsettled and uncertain, according to a source close to the case.

But even as news trickled out from the courtroom in San Antonio, where the case was postponed for a month, an even more startling development was transpiring elsewhere.

The Vanishing of Bowens Mill Christian Center Airport.

An investigation into Doug McClain Sr's tenure as a leader of a Christian cult called “The Move,” led to links between the cult's airport in Georgia and [a CIA-connected aviation charter company](#).

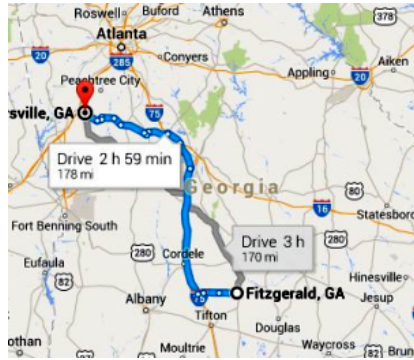
Presidential Airways flew extraordinary renditions, one of which changed European attitudes about the way the U.S. was conducting the war on terror. While pursuing links between the cult and the CIA-connected aviation charter company, our probe hit an unexpected snag: the airport disappeared from view three days ago.



[A profile of the Bowen Mill Christian Center Airport](#) in Fitzgerald, Georgia, that was [visible just a few days ago](#), including nearby weather, a satellite photo of the airport's runway, and pictures of nine planes belonging to

Presidential Aviation that called the airport home, is gone.

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Someone connected with the Christian cult removed the web links to its private airport. Taking its place, along with the [Bowens Mill Christian Center Airport's](#) FAA airport code, 74GA, is an airport located 180 miles away, Johnson Airport in Lutherville, Georgia.

The memory of the airport website lingers on, however, [in Google's cache](#), complete with its newsworthy features intact.

This is probably not what whoever hastily “disappeared” the airport’s web presence had in mind. Cooler heads would have informed that the removal would be seen to be a desperate move designed to forestall further investigation. Instead, the move has advertised the fact the someone at the airport has something to hide. This, of course, invites added scrutiny.

Moreover the move may also have created a potentially dangerous situation in the air. Pilots scanning the ground below for landmarks to guide them into an airfield with the FAA airport code 74GA could very well find themselves examining scenery that’s 80 miles south of their true destination.

A pilot struggling with a map in his lap, unable to find any familiar nearby landmark—of a conga line of Christian cultists, say, flagellating themselves while weaving around outdoor speakers booming Christian rock—could be excused for throwing up his hands in despair and landing on the highway.



Okay. It’s gone. Here’s why...

When something as large as an airport dematerializes overnight, my first response is to wonder, “Was it something I said?”



Perhaps it was. Days earlier I’d interviewed Darryl Cobb, the airport manager until its recent and unfortunate demise. He’s also the son of co-founder and long-time Move cult headman Carrell C.E. (Buddy) Cobb.

Why would nine planes owned by Presidential Aviation Inc., an aviation charter company numerous published sources called “CIA-connected,” list his tiny airport—with no tower, no amenities, and a dirt and grass runway—as home?

“Your reporting was totally bogus,” Cobb asserted. “There’s no way anything like that ever happened here, all those planes landing here.”

The allegation was absurd, Cobb said. The airports’ only use was by “a bunch of ministers that had their own airplanes.” It was a grass field, completely unsuitable for Presidential Aviation’s high-end Gulfstream III’s and

IV's, known as "heavy iron."

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"I never reported the planes landed at your airport," I replied.

"Well then what are you saying?" he challenged.

I replied, "I'm saying a CIA-connected aviation charter company called Presidential Aviation listed your airport as home base for nine very expensive airplanes, and you can't, or won't, tell me why."

You can't miss him. Green sweater. Metal shackles

The heightened scrutiny of Doug McClain's cultic past has unearthed evidence suggesting a link between two significant but seemingly-unconnected aviation incidents that occurred almost a decade ago.

The first, which lasted only 37 minutes, will haunt public opinion in Europe, and eventually destroy popular support for the way the George W. Bush Administration was conducting the war on terrorism.

On a warm October evening in the skies over Rome, an executive jet radioed ahead that it would be landing shortly at Ciampino Airport, a small military field near Italy's ancient Via Appia.



The plane, a Gulfstream III (N829MG), was owned by Presidential Aviation, which had begun flying "extraordinary renditions," both a phrase and concept not yet widely-known.

On board are five CIA agents, two pilots... and Maher Arar, a tall, Canadian man wearing a green sweater, a pair of jeans, and metal shackles.

How do you blind a duck?



Carrell C.E. "Buddy" Cobb

Bowens Mill Christian Center Airport is owned by "The Move," Doug McClain's former cult. It adjoins [the cult's headquarters](#), run by the cult's leader, Carrell C.E. (Buddy) Cobb, and managed by the cult leader's son, Darryl Cobb.

There is no tower, no fixed-base-of-operations (FBO) and take-offs and landings take place on a dirt and grass runway. The airport could hardly be more inconspicuous.

So why did a CIA-connected aviation charter company advertise its presence at a tiny airport run by a secretive Christian cult? At first glance, there seems several ways to answer that question. One would be to call the Presidential Airways phone number listed on the site. It's no longer in service. Calling Presidential's headquarters at the notorious Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport was another option. But phoning in a question prompted general laughter in the flight room, and not much else.

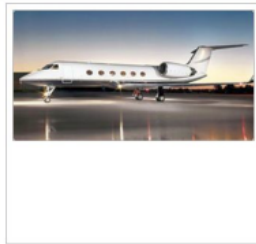
A second approach would be to set up a duck blind in tall grass—assuming there is any—surrounding the rural airport, much like the admirable men and women from the world-renowned planespotters, and settle in to record take-offs and landings.

A third is to delve deeper into Doug McClain's criminal career, both in and out of the cult, to see if that illuminates the puzzling questions swirling around the cult, and its contributions, if any, to the sizable role played by general aviation in massive, decades-long, and often state-sponsored organized crime.

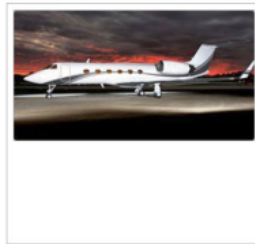


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The end of the world as we know it.



Gulfstream IV
Presidential Aviation, Inc. (ATL)
707.224.1110



Gulfstream IV
Presidential Aviation, Inc. (ATL)
707.224.1110

Once over the initial hurdles, my conversation with Darryl Cobb moved on smartly. I asked him, “How did the group acquire so many airplanes?”

“The church never owned any planes,” Cobb replied. “Local churches registered the planes. It was like a network, but there was no official organization.”

Each minister owned his own plane, he asserted. There was no central authority, or corporation, involved.

“We don't have any membership. Every group is autonomous,” he continued. “They're only affiliated through like beliefs, and through their understanding of the Word. They are all independent ministries.”

Right, I thought. And John Gotti and his buddies at the Ravenite Social Club in New York just got together to play cards. I didn't say anything. But I felt slightly embarrassed, as if I had. So I asked a dumb and very obvious question. “So, um, in the early '80's, how did your group end up with colonies in Colombia, Peru, and Guatemala?”

Cobb matched my stammer with one of his own. “That was due, to, ah, the fact that we had a minister who felt the world economic system wasn't in such great shape,” he replied, without much conviction.



“Sam Fife had an understanding that there could be a possible collapse of the economic system of the world,” he continued, recovering quickly. “Same as what everyone's taking about today, you know? He said we had only five years. And for him, he did have five years... till he crashed a plane down in Guatemala.”

I reminded him that people have been saying “the end is near” since well before Jesus walked the earth. Cobb merely grunted.

It seemed to go without saying that its been a cheap way to make a buck ever since.

Taking a ride on a plane to hell

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BIGGIN HILL: Torture victim's plea to end rendition flights

By Robert Fisk 8:30am Tuesday 11th August 2009 in News

EXTRAORDINARY rendition flights through airports such as Biggin Hill must be stopped, says a torture victim who was flown to the Middle East and spent 10 months in a Syrian jail.

Maher Arar says his reputation has been ruined because of his experience after September 2001, and he is suing the American government to try and get it to stop the secret flights.

The father of two was arrested in September 2002 while on a stop-over in New York.

He was detained and interrogated for two weeks by the city's police, the FBI and the American immigration service.

He was then bundled on to a plane and flown via Europe to Jordan before being transported to Syria.



Maher Arar was tortured in Syria

After touching down on European soil just long enough to refuel— 37 minutes—the Gulfstream III took off for Amman, Jordan, where Maher Arar was carried off the plane, beaten, and loaded into a van headed to Damascus.

Arar, a computer programmer with no relationship with terrorism, endured 10 months of torture based on completely false evidence.

The investigations and recriminations which followed provoked a deep sense of alarm across Europe. The use of Italian airports to transport Arar led to the collapse of Italy's government.

A European Union report spoke uneasily of similar cases beginning to emerge. Relations between the U.S. and European allies soured, as the allies began facing outrage from their own people.

In Canada, Maher Arar's case led to the resignation of the head of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, an apology from the Canadian Prime Minister, payment of \$11.5-million in damages, and a remarkable level of tension between ideological bedfellows, the Republican Administration in the U.S. and the Conservative Party in Canada.

Gracious living in the Peachtree State

Today, a search on the web for the airport with the FAA airport code 74GA produces sharp differences of opinion on websites which list FAA airport codes, about which of two contenders has the more legitimate claim.

How had the Bowens Mill Christian Center Airport lost its FAA airport code? Had it been tied to a windsock on the field, and then come loose in a rainstorm? Wafted north all the way to Lutherville (*Lex* Lutherville?) on a strong spring breeze?

We were struggling with questions only an FAA spokesman could confidently address. Increasing concern even more, numerous calls to FAA officials—including one public information officer who was actually boots-on-the-frigging-ground *in*

Georgia itself—had not been returned by press time.



We're used to being snubbed by FAA officials. So our response was completely altruistic. We were concerned. Had our phone calls caused the official in Georgia to assume a duck and cover position under her desk? If so, would she know when it was once again safe to come out?



Pass the toilet paper

There is heightened sensitivity, its safe to say, around the [“issue” of Doug McClain](#). Now in the spotlight for his arrest for elder abuse, Doug McClain's past seems to have finally caught up with him.

Because McClain is an important figure in the operation which lost two American-registered planes when they were caught smuggling a total of almost ten tons of cocaine, his long career as an unpunished financial criminal is of more than passing interest.



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His swindles, scams, rackets, cons, and career as a grifter, during which he stole millions from innocent shareholders and unwary investors, will shortly be detailed in this space.

But currently McClain's more distant past is receiving close scrutiny. McClain was a leader in the “traveling ministry” of a [Christian cult called “The Move”](#) which grew to as many as 25,000 members living on farms and ranches on four continents during the 1970's while simultaneously maintaining a nearly non-existent public profile.

According to the International Cultic Studies Association in Bonita Springs Florida, there are in excess of 3000 known cults (called “high-demand groups”). Most are well-known to cultic experts. The Move, somehow, was not on anyone's radar until 2012.

“They would boast about flying to exotic locations in expensive private jets,” said one member, whose parent joined when he was twelve. “They were living off people in the group who were so poor they couldn't afford toilet paper.”

That sounds like our boy.

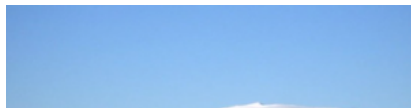
The missing ingredient

The NEW YORK TIMES had once reported that the cult owned “a fleet of planes.”

“There is something you're missing here,” another former cult member told me.

“The farms' weren't generating any money. When I lived there we were shooting moose illegally just so we'd have food. Yet the cult owned at least a dozen airplanes at any one time. When you have a group that's got no money, where's the money coming from?”

He stared at me, awaiting a response. I stared back blankly.



“The thing that's always really sparked my curiosity,” he continued, “is that they didn't really have any farms or believers in Peru or Colombia or





Guatemala in the 70's.

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“And yet they spent an incredible amount of time spent going back and forth to South America. But on really short trips. If they came to Canton Ohio, for example, where they had a big revival, they'd stay for a week.”

“But when they would go down to Guatemala, or go down to Colombia, or go down to Peru, or Nicaragua, on trips we would hear about, they would always just go there and be back like the next day.”

“And after I grew up and began doing some research, I began to wonder, what is going on down there? Why was Sam down there? In a place where The Move had no business?”

Zombies in Georgia: Urban legend?

We struggled for answers to the mystery of how [FAA airport code 74GA](#) had made its way from a Christian cult into the hip pocket of someone or other in Lutherville Georgia. Was something going on in Georgia these days? The one thing that came to mind, beside snow removal blues in Atlanta, was the name of Georgia's biggest export: The Walking Dead.



Consider: If the Christians of Bowens Mill had been wiped out *en masse*, there'd no longer be any need for an airport. Zombies don't fly. Do they?

We contacted FAA headquarters in Oklahoma City, located at what appears to be a concrete bunker zombie-proof structure called the Mike Mulroney Aeronautical Center.



How often do airport codes change? How does one airport end up with the airport code that was assigned to another?

“Re-assigning an airport code number is unusual,” stated a brusque but polite public relations officer. “But more information will need to wait on a response from your local FAA public information officer in Georgia.”

So she wasn't dead from a zombie attack, or on the run in some dust Bowl state. She'd had the moxie to contact her boss in Oklahoma before it all became too much. And obviously I felt enormous relief. No one likes to think they're the cause of a public official crouching underneath her desk, day after day.

Walk this way

Doug McClain was one of the most popular leaders in [the traveling ministry](#), according to several former members. Even after he left, for supposed 'doctrinal differences,' he retained associations with the leaders,



and continued preaching and collecting tithes in the churches.

McClain could be very charming, she said. "But I know lots of people, personally, who were ripped off by Doug McClain."



Another woman, who remembers McClain from their time in Alaska, agrees. "A lot of money went to Doug McClain. Under the guise of tithing, Doug took money from a lot of people, including single mothers," she recalled. "If a woman was married, the cult would tell her, 'If your husband won't come this way, you need to get a divorce.'"

"He came through Canton Ohio, one time, and got a huge tithe, even after announcing he was leaving the group. But he never really left. There's still groups in Texas. One in Lubbock, one in Dallas, and a small group in Houston."

"Doug stole quite a bit of money before he even left the Move," said a third woman who was knowledgeable about what went on backstage at the cult.

"But whenever anything happened that was illegal, everything was covered up. We dealt with our own problems. Buddy believed that anything that happens to you is the will of God.

Apophrenia? Maybe. Doesn't mean the number "23" isn't everywhere."



Read Part II next. Then ponder these questions... Is pursuing this line of thought a sign of delusional thinking? Could this be mere coincidence?

Apophenia is the perception of or belief in connectedness, where none exists, among unrelated phenomena. Its the tendency to find meaningful patterns—a heightened and abnormal meaningfulness—in meaningless noise.

Its human nature to seek patterns in random information. A gambler thinks he sees patterns in the winning numbers in the lottery. Someone else sees Jesus in french toast.

Apophenia is at one end of a spectrum. The opposite tendency— call it "**randomania**"—attributes chance probability to what are obviously patterns in the data.

The "coincidentist" theory of the Kennedy assassination is an example of randomania, because it denies the observable fact that real power in American society conveys the ability—under circumstances that would otherwise justify screaming bold headlines—to keep your name out of the newspapers.

Randomania is what American muckraker Upton Sinclair was talking when he said, of fellow journalists, "It is difficult to get a man to understand something when his salary depends on his not understanding it."

New Orleans [District Attorney Jim Garrison](#) was another great American sage. Here's what he said: "I knew by

now that when a group of individuals gravitated toward one another for no apparent reason, or inexplicabl Font Size: + headed in the same direction as if drawn by a magnetic field, or coincidence piled on coincidence too many times, as often as not the shadowy outlines of a covert intelligence operation were somehow becoming visible.”

Apophenia or Randomania? You make the call.

(But read part II first, cause, hey, you never know.)

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About Daniel Hopsicker

Daniel Hopsicker is an investigative journalist dubious about the self-serving assertion of U.S. officials that there are no American Drug Lords.

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Jeff Graf says:

March 24, 2014 at 2:40 am

I wonder if rendition flights squawk (have their transponder on)

Jeff Graf says:

March 22, 2014 at 4:26 pm

Randomania seems to sum up everything 100 percent public surveillance is defending

W Vann Hall says:

March 22, 2014 at 11:39 am

I hate to say it, but you may have been chasing questionable database programming.

It appears the “based at” section of AirplaneManager.com pulls entries from CharterMatrix.com based at *or* near the selected airport. If you look at the current listing for airport 74GA, you’ll see all of the entries for Presidential Aviation previously displayed on the Bowens Mill page are now shown as “based at” Johnson Airport. However, you’ll also see each aircraft is tagged with an IATA code — in this case, ATL, indicating Atlanta’s Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport.

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While the Bowens Mill entry may have been pulled from AirplaneManager as a result of your inquiries, it looks as if it relinquished its status as a published public use airport in Fall of 2011. It’s shown as ‘withdrawn’ in late 2011 updates to Jeppesen’s GPS/VFR guides; similarly, it’s included in the DOT/IRS list of rural airports for 2009 but disappears by the 2012 list (seemingly the next update). Johnson Airport (a private airstrip owned by a kit-plane hobbyist) went active in September 2013, at which point it seemingly was assigned the code, 74GA, previously associated with Bowens Mill. (Such four-digit codes are held for no more than a year before being reused.)

None of this should be seen to take anything away from your main thesis but, I hope, to clarify it.

David Koski says:

March 21, 2014 at 11:54 pm

There is an engineering expression called “tolerance stack-ups or stacks”. It is analogous to the heaps of BS that are always given the benefit of doubt in a world of randomness (new word for me). Essentially, you have a number of parts that all have to fit together, and the cumulative variances of all combined can make it not function or assemble as a whole.

In investigating a conspiracy, we pick apart one piece and disprove it or cause doubt of its veracity. That usually gets shot down with some sort of deniability. Yet, connecting the dots or stringing together the system, there can be no doubt as to deception

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tolerance_analysis

Malcolm McIntyre says:

March 21, 2014 at 1:40 pm

Always appreciate your work Daniel, particularly since buying your books about 1) Barry Seal and 2) Terrorland 9/11. Hope you’re keeping your arse covered ... it’s probably after time you considered flying the coop and coming to a servile nation like Australia: we’ll probably all be bugged in the end, but you’re more at risk there right now because all resistance in the US must be crushed first, while we’re compliant so likely to be left alone for the time being.

Good luck

Malcolm

Deborah Layne says:

March 21, 2014 at 12:54 pm

Awesome work, Daniel. Just awesome. This is beginning even to stun me.

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