

Collective Insecurity Hovers Over Flight 370

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As I write this commentary on the tragedy of Malaysian Flight 370, I feel no emotions tied to the people involved. Why? I'm a far distant observer, TV watcher, radio listener and Internet cruiser. Has constantly following terrible news made me numb?

Concerning Flight 370: weeks ago, many like me slowly fell away from the feeble daily diet of maybe's, what if's, could be's. Starting on March 8th, we dutifully sat through educational geography tutorials of places we've never seen before and would likely never visit. We were also made privy to short video lessons on a variety of small, technical locator devices. Attention-getting computer simulations of aircraft up, and then down, left no hope of survivors - we got it! The beginning of each broadcast found us curious followers paying a minimal cover charge at the door. The price? That we cared.

Survivors. Isn't that what we are?

The newsy enigma drew and then kept us in a slow, fact-filled whirlpool. But, really why was that? You and I filled the sideline bleachers *when* the game was over; the bird was down. Impromptu spectators, yes, and instantly the best-informed viewers international media could muscle up. Spring 2014 gave anyone on the planet a spoon feeding of the latest updates of Flight 370. The Web helped create the latest emotional and intellectual webwork known to man.

Again, what drew us in and kept us there? I believe the answer swirls around the word *empty*.

Yes, Asian news agencies and resources do not match America's. And true, the majority of Americans couldn't point out on a map the takeoff or landing sites...not even for a Mega Millions jackpot. Passengers? Three of our own citizens. So, where does "empty" come into my reasoning? The world's best professionals and modern resources came up empty. We hung onto the daily updates due to the want of success. Soon, people tired of routine failure. Some viewers here even felt the same deepening emotions of the suffering families there.

Clearly, we didn't like the collective insecurity which rose out of empty searches, zero findings and exhausted efforts. The shared human consensus: *this-was-not-supposed-to-happen; we're-passed-this-kind-of-thing!* When an entire plane, housing the population of a small village, completely disappears, we intuitively recall the primal sense of feeling alone and lost, too. Our self-preservation? Threatened! All the king's horses and all the king's tech support men could not conquer this global query. We watched because we wanted security and our norm to return. But, no. The earth cracked open and swallowed some of the inhabitants whole. After all, the vulnerable crew and passengers were taken against their will.

Plane crashes? We've seen 'em all. Take-offs, mid-air, landings, over and over again. But, failing to get even *one* Malaysian seat cushion to become an emergency floatation device...is wrong! Is beneath us! And is... mysterious. We armchair survivors find this impossible. No clues left behind, nothing washing up, nor beacons beeping. And worst of all – not one identifiable corpse. Such a complete disappearance leaves men and women feeling vacant. The total loss of 239 lives, luggage and a winged-modern marvel tells the lonely part of us that we are not alone. Indeed, there's a monster out there – somewhere – which can still prevail against all of our combined strength – when it wants to. Swallows entire, no gulp, no burp nor sound heard.

Medieval maps warned at the edge of unknown waters, "Here There Be Dragons." If those passengers can disappear, so can we...then others will care about us.