

Did the Solar Eclipse Create an Image of the Cross in the Heavens?

After this week's astonishing total solar eclipse, an image showing the sun's rays forming a cross in the darkened sky made the rounds on social media.

"Amazing photo of the #SolarEclipse2017," the New York City Police Department's Holy Name Society, a club for Roman Catholic officers in the force, tweeted Monday (Aug. 21) a few hours after the event ended. "The Lord Reigns."

Amazing photo of the #SolarEclipse2017 . The Lord Reigns.

– NYPD Holy Name (@NYPD_HOLYNAME) August 22, 2017

But says nope. The online fact-checking organization ruled the image "fauxtography" and slapped it with the site's most negative ruling: FALSE in bright red capital letters.

According to Snopes, the image was posted by Dan Asmussen of Federal Way, Wash., who crowed in a Facebook post, "Best photo so far ... Not sure anyone can top this one," with a smiley face emoticon for good measure. His post was shared more than 1.7 million times.

Snopes discovered Asmussen's image was created in 2011 from an image on Obsidian Digital, a landing page on the website DeviantArt. The page is run by "Brandon," a 31-year-old man from Ohio who is the proud owner of a "Star Trek Online Handle" and loves Bugs Bunny.

Obsidian Digital changed the orientation of the original image of the eclipse by using software to turn it on its side for the cross effect, Snopes explained. This once, "God" truly

was in the machine.

Some folks claimed they were not fooled. “Always surprised at urban myths people fall for,” Mark Schram tweeted. “Latest is solar eclipse pic with sunlight in shape of a cross. Photo-shopped in 2011. C’mon.” {eoa}

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