



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on May 3, 2010

## A “South Park” Connection to Times Square Bomb Attempt?

The ranking Republican on the House Homeland Security Committee said Sunday there might be a connection between Saturday night’s failed car bomb attempt in Times Square and a New York-based Muslim organization that threatened retribution against the producers of *South Park* over an irreverent depiction of the Prophet Muhammad on the animated cartoon show that appears weekly on the cable channel Comedy Central.



"It’s one possibility out of 100, but this vehicle was close to a Viacom building (photo at left), which owns MTV and Comedy Central," Rep. Peter King of New York said during an appearance on the Cable News Network. "And you have the whole issue with *South Park*, which Islamic terrorists were threatening to have retribution for. So all of these things have to be looked at."

A posting on the Web site of Revolution Muslim warned producers Trey Parker and Matt Stone of a deadly retribution after the April 14 episode of *South Park* depicted Muhammad in a bear suit. The show routinely lampoons religious figures as well as politicians and celebrities. While many of the caricatures are crude and vulgar, Muslims consider any visual depiction meant to represent Muhammad as blasphemy.

The post, written by a member named Abu Talhah Al-Amrikee, said the episode "outright insulted" the prophet, adding: "We have to warn Matt and Trey that what they are doing is stupid, and they will probably wind up like Theo van Gogh for airing this show. This is not a threat, but a warning of the reality of what will likely happen to them."

Van Gogh, a Dutch filmmaker, was killed by an Islamic militant in 2004 after he made a film about the abuse of Muslim women in some Islamic societies. Two years later, the publication of cartoons satirizing Muhammad in a Danish newspaper touched off Muslim riots in the Middle East and in Europe.

The posting included what the Associated Press described as a "gruesome picture" of Van Gogh, who was both shot and stabbed to death on a street in Amsterdam. It also listed the addresses of Comedy Central’s New York office and Parker and Stone’s production office in California and included a link to a Huffington Post article that described a Colorado retreat owned by the two men. In an interview with the AP, Al-Amrikee said the posting was intended to raise awareness of the issue. When asked if the producers should feel threatened by it, he said "they should feel threatened by what they did." Amrikee



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said he "can't answer that legally," when asked if his organization was in favor of jihad. In the interview, he expressed support for Ossama bin Laden. "We look up to him and admire him for the sacrifices he has given for the religion," he said.

In a separate blog, Revolution Islam sought to clarify the warning to Parker and Stone. "By placing the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in a bear suit, the creators of South Park sought to insult the sacred, and show their blatant and general disregard for religion, the blog post said. The group claimed it was "not trying to directly incite violence, but we are trying to explain the gravity of the situation and prevent this from occurring ever again."

In interview with the Canadian newspaper the *Globe and Mail*, of Younes Abdullah Mohammed, a founding member of Revolution Muslim, said the group was not calling for the killing of Parker and Stone, but said they deserved such a fate.

"If it happens to them, they deserve it," Mohammed told the Toronto publication. "*South Park* plays a role in the hedonistic, vice-based society that keeps America ignorant." Last year, Mohammed [told CNN](#) that there was nothing wrong with the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

"I don't think it was wrong, I think it was justified," he said. "We're commanded to terrorize the disbelievers." In the interview, Mohammed defined "terrorize" as "making them fearful so that they think twice before they go rape your mother or kill your brother or go onto your land and try to steal your resources."

The *New York Times* reported on April 22 that Mohammed, in a telephone interview, related the group's complaints about "South Park" to American support for Israel and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Asked at the time if the F.B.I. were investigating the organization over the threat to the show's producers, Special Agent Richard Kolko told the *Times* the bureau did not "monitor people or groups, we investigate criminal activity." He said that while the F.B.I. investigates threats over the Internet when it sees a potential for the threat to be carried out, "in most cases there are First Amendment issues and the F.B.I. vigorously defends people's First Amendment rights." Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly told the *Times*: "We don't think that this threat, as currently assessed, rises to a crime right now."

The warning apparently had an effect on the following week's episode of "South Park," which continued the story line about efforts to bring Muhammad to a fictional Colorado town. But Parker and Stone had covered the image depicting the Prophet with the word "CENSORED" and each mention of his name was "bleeped" out. On their SouthParkStudios.com Web site, the producers later said that Comedy Central added more "bleeps" and deleted a speech at the end about "intimidation and fear."

"It didn't mention Muhammad at all but it got bleeped too," they wrote.

Apparently, threats or warnings from some Muslim groups get the attention of Comedy Central in a way that protests from other people and organizations offended South Park's presentations do not. According to the Associated Press, the cable channel banned Parker and Stone from showing an image of Muhammad planned for a 2006 show in what was intended as a commentary on the furor at the time over the caricatures of the Prophet in the Danish newspaper.



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"Instead," the A.P. recalled, *South Park* "showed an image of Jesus Christ defecating on President George W. Bush and the American flag."

*Photo: A Viacom sign is shown at the company's headquarters in New York: AP Images*



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