

When Preparation and Chance Intersect

By Ned Pennock



I photographed the April 8, 2024, total eclipse from my brother-in-law's farm near Williamsburg, IN. I had been thinking about the eclipse ever since my wife and I returned home from Clarksville, TN, following the August 21, 2017, total eclipse. I captured some decent photos of that eclipse, along with thousands of other photographers.

In the months leading up to the 2024 eclipse, I pondered not even setting up my camera to take photos. After all, a lot of the advice out there is to simply soak up the experience, rather than fiddling with camera settings. However, I decided that I couldn't pass up the opportunity to try to photograph another eclipse.

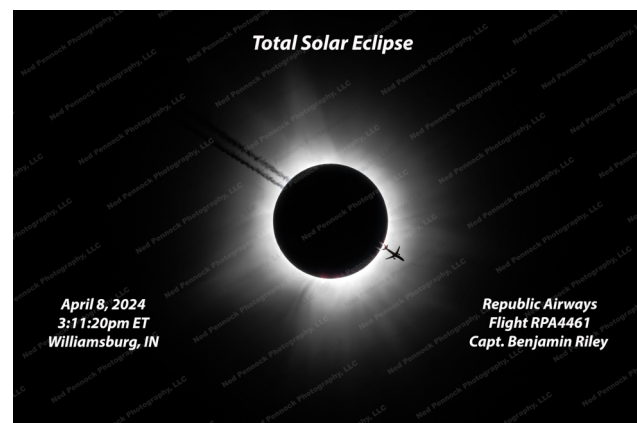
We went to bed the night before to storms and a forecast that was calling for overcast skies in the morning of the eclipse, with partial clearing in the afternoon. We were hopeful, but not overly optimistic that we would even see the eclipse. To our great surprise, we woke up on the 8th to clear skies...skies that remained largely clear for the entire duration of the eclipse. So, I went ahead and set up my camera near our small RV in my brother-in-law's yard.

For you camera nerds out there, I used a Canon R5 with a Canon RF 100-500mm lens. During the partial eclipse, I used a Lee solar filter to capture the various phases of the eclipse leading up to totality. I took photos about every 15 minutes. Then, when totality occurred, I took off my solar filter and switched my camera to shoot a bracketed series of seven photos, altering my shutter speed from 1/4 to 1/1000 sec. I used this technique throughout totality and then switched back after totality ended.

The eclipse started (first contact) at approximately 1:54:11 p.m. EDT and totality (second contact) started at approximately 3:07:49 p.m. EDT.

In the meantime, American Eagle Flight No. 4461 (operated by Republic Airways) was soaring at an elevation of 36,000 feet and a speed of 413 mph. It left La Guardia at about 1:30, heading west on its way to St. Louis.

The night before the trip, the pilot realized he would be passing over Indianapolis close to the time of totality. He calculated that the flight would need to gain 15 minutes to



make it on time to see totality. The flight managed to depart La Guardia early (a miracle in itself) and flew fast and accepted all shortcuts. Due to good planning and some good luck, he was able to reduce the flight time to fly into the path of totality.

At 3:11:20 p.m. EDT, our two perspectives on the eclipse intersected...literally...and resulted in a series of photographs of Flight AA4461 seeming to pass right through the eclipse as shown here. Please visit my website to see all my eclipse photos...and many more... at nedpennockphotography.com.

If you are interested in purchasing any photos, please feel free to do so directly from my website or by reaching out to me at nedthephotodude@gmail.com.

I hope that many of you were able to view the eclipse. It really was an awesome sight. For me, seeing Flight RPA4461 and then connecting with Captain Riley made the experience even more special.

Cheers,

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