

How Ironic Discourse on r/alien Builds Government Distrust

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The Community & Question

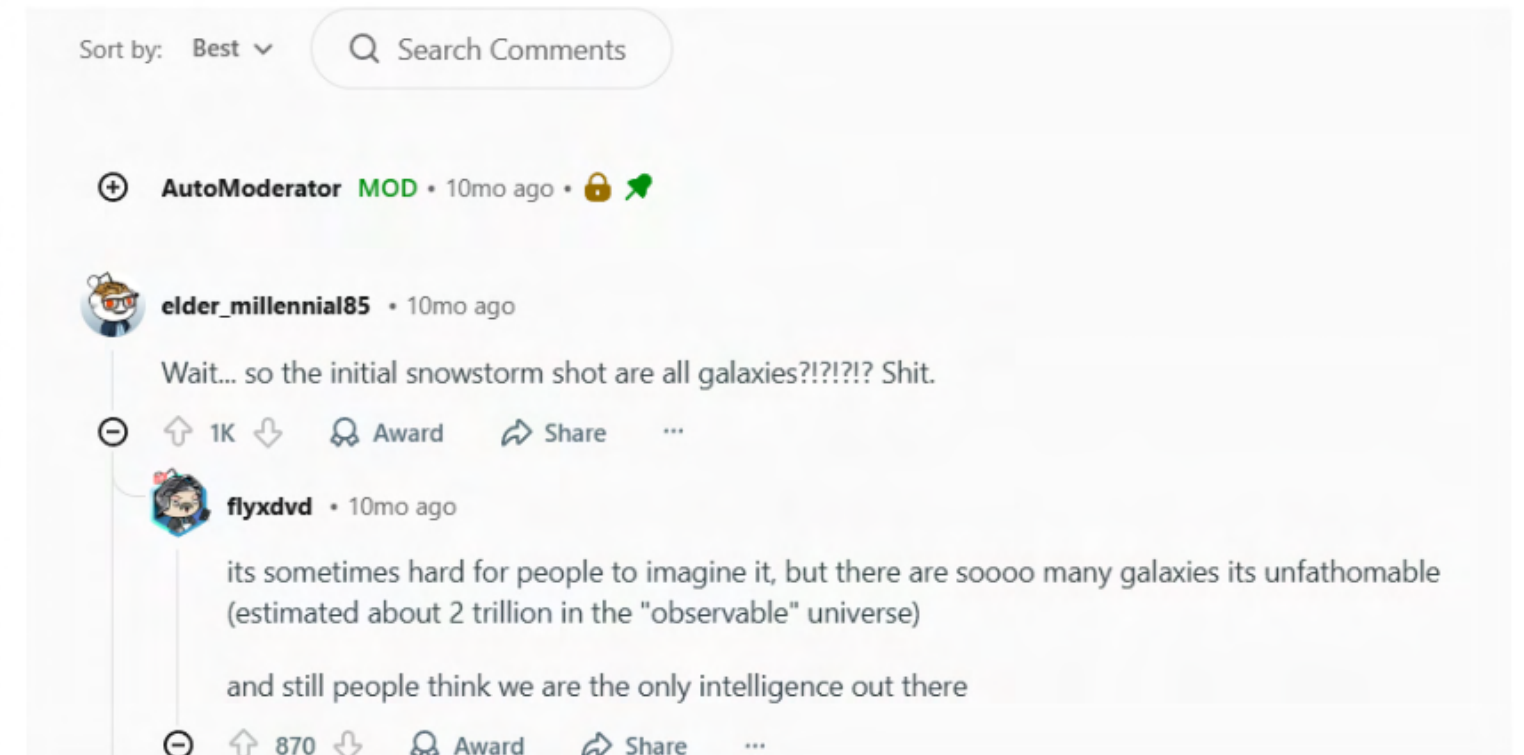
How does the use of ironic discourse on the r/alien subreddit contribute to genuine government distrust?

Irony Poisoning

Definition: A process where the line between joking about a belief and sincerely holding that belief becomes blurred.

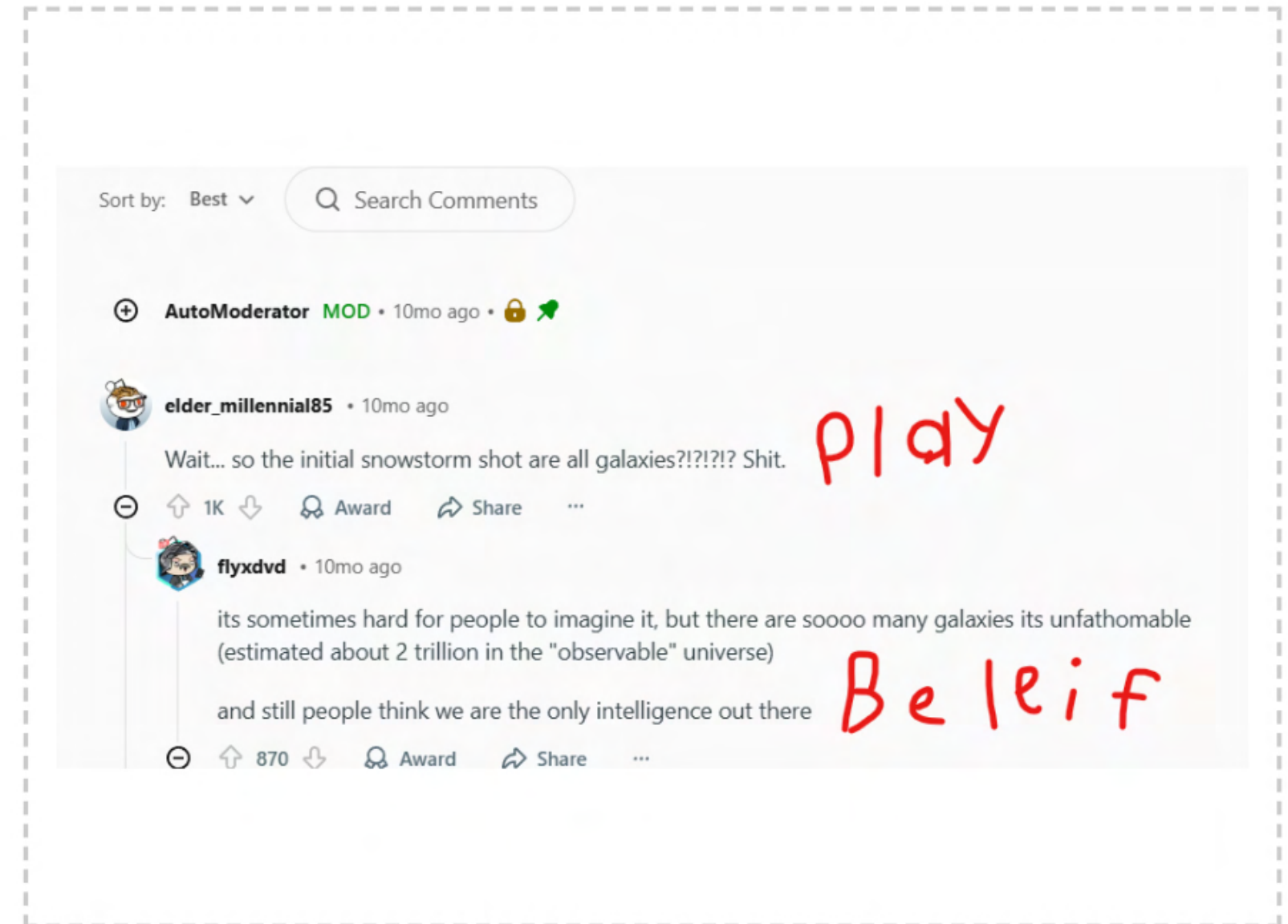
Methodology 1: Data Collection

- Data Source: The r/alien subreddit.
- Step 1: Identified the 15 most popular posts from the past year.
- Step 2: Selected 5 representative comment threads for analysis.
- Step 3: Focused on the top-voted comment and its first reply.



Methodology 2: Analytical Framework

- Method: Qualitative Discourse Coding.
- Framework (De Wildt & Aupers):
 - PLAY: Ironical / humorous.
 - DOUBT: Skeptical / evidence-based.
 - BELIEF: Sincere / serious.
- Goal: Track the shift in conversation.



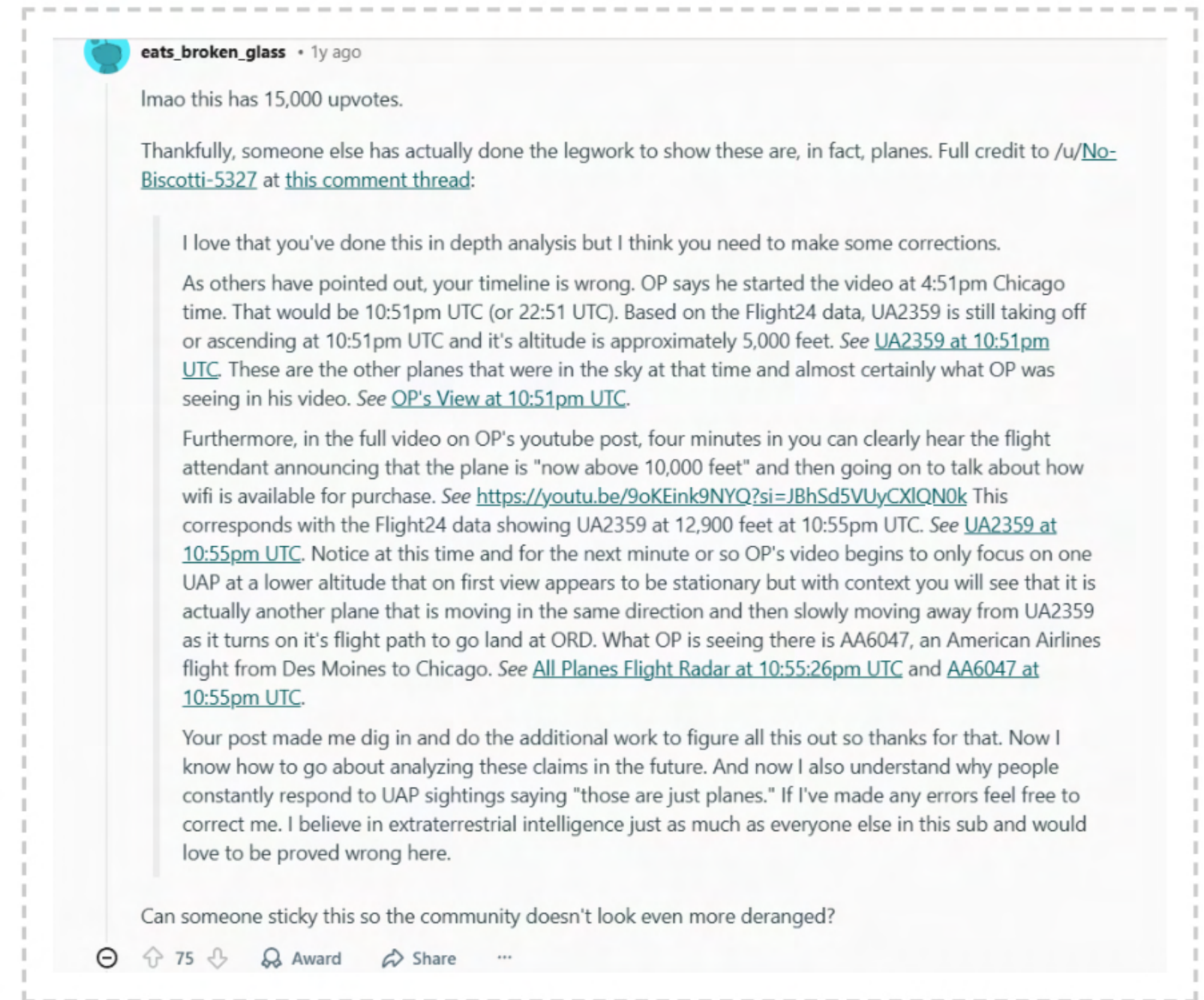
Finding #1: "Play" as the Starting Point

- Ironic "Play" normalizes distrust of authority.
- Example: In a thread on a government cover-up, the top comment was a joke: "At this stage, aliens would be one of the less scary outcomes."
- Function: This establishes a shared baseline of cynicism and builds community through sarcasm.



Finding #2: The Twist - A Culture of Skepticism

- The community is not just a simple echo chamber.
- Example: A popular UAP video was thoroughly debunked by a user with flight-tracking data. This debunking comment was highly praised.
- Implication: Users are skeptical of all claims, not just official ones. They actively work to filter bad information.



Conclusion: How Distrust is Really Formed

Distrust comes from building an alternative system of verification.

1. Play creates a cynical environment.
2. Internal Doubt acts as a community peer-review filter.
3. When a claim passes their filter, it becomes shared Belief.

The Result: The community trusts its own process more than official sources, making government statements irrelevant.

Thank You