

# **How Ironic Discourse on r/aliens Builds Government Distrust**

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# The Community & Question

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

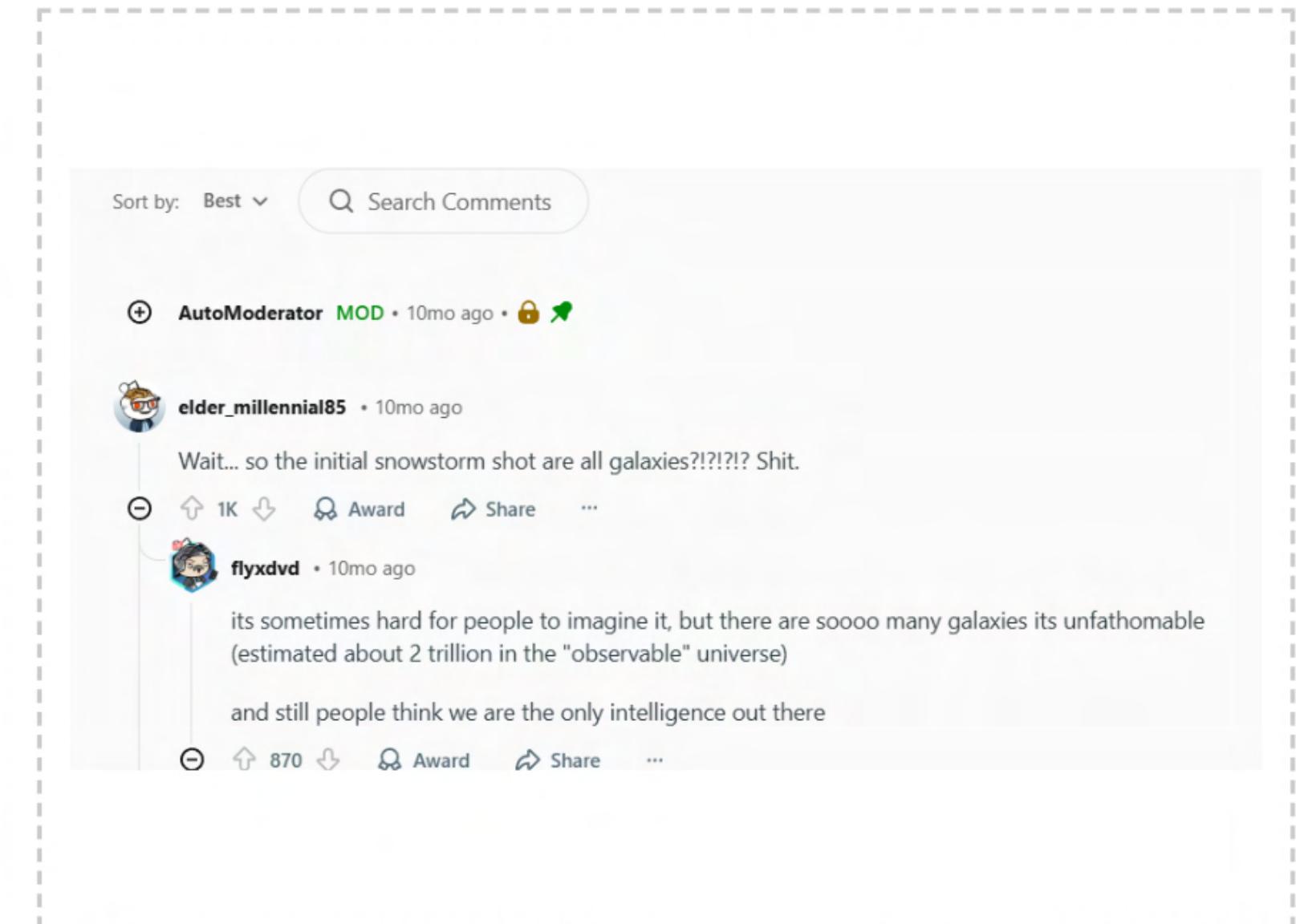
# Irony Poisoning

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

# Methodology 1: Data Collection

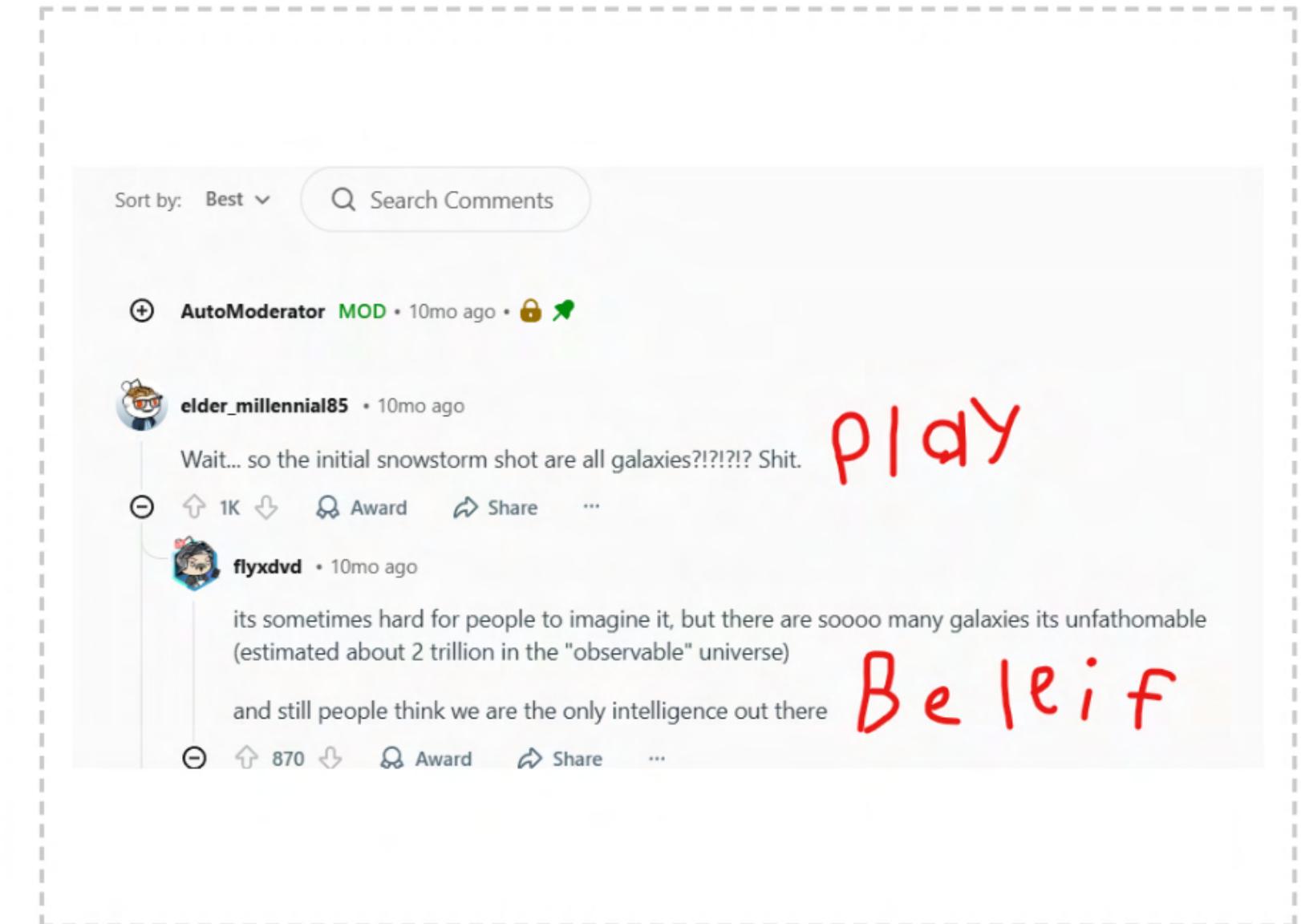
- Data Source: The r/aliens subreddit.
- Step 1: Identified the 15 most popular posts from the past year.
- Step 2: Selected 5 representative comment threads for analysis.
- Step 3: Focused on the top-voted comment and its first reply.



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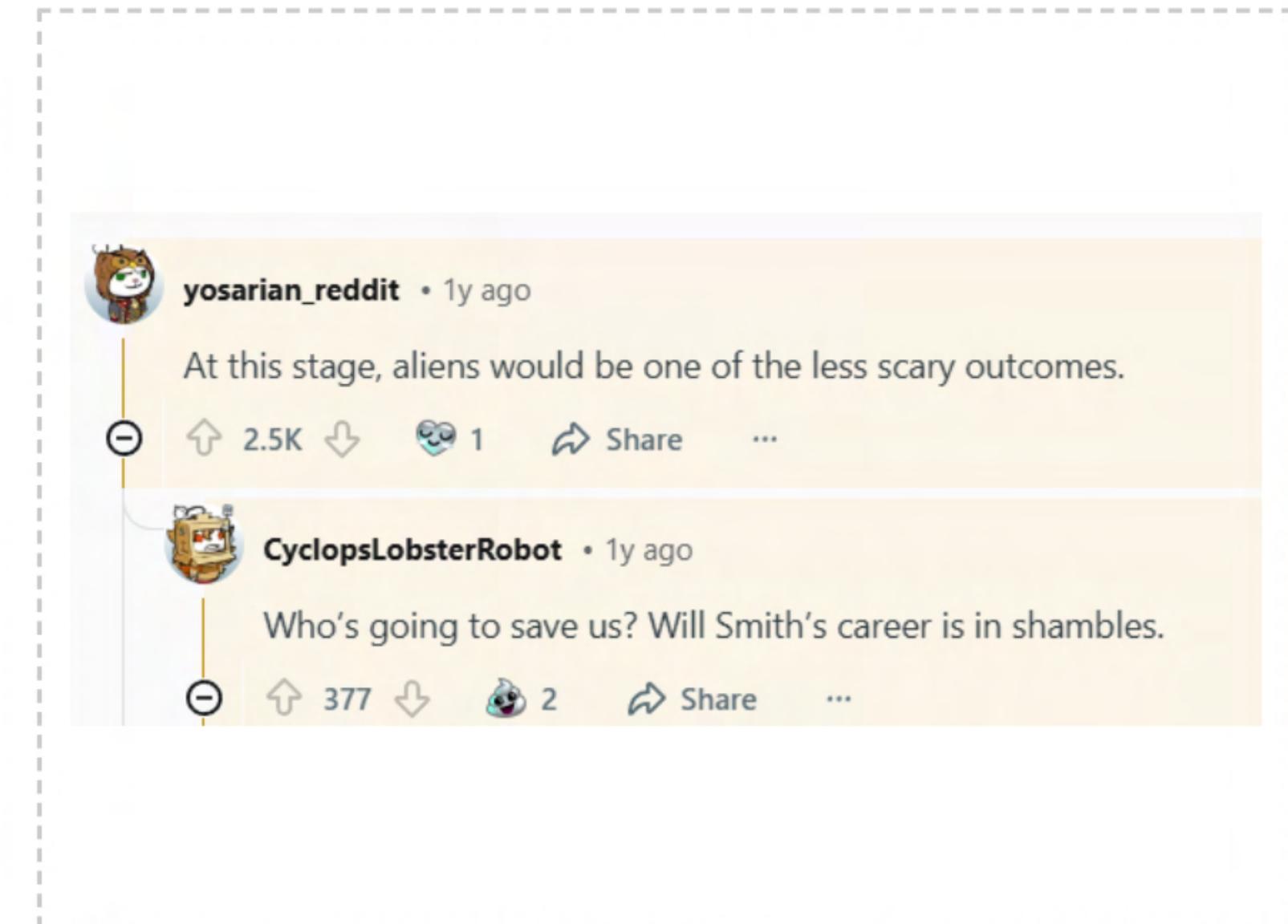
# Methodology 2: Analytical Framework

- Method: Qualitative Discourse Coding.
- Framework (De Wildt & Aupers):
  - PLAY: Ironic / 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.

eats\_broken\_glass • 1y ago

Imao this has 15,000 upvotes.

Thankfully, someone else has actually done the legwork to show these are, in fact, planes. Full credit to /u/[No-Biscotti-5327](#) at [this comment thread](#):

I love that you've done this in depth analysis but I think you need to make some corrections. As others have pointed out, your timeline is wrong. OP says he started the video at 4:51pm Chicago time. That would be 10:51pm UTC (or 22:51 UTC). Based on the Flight24 data, UA2359 is still taking off or ascending at 10:51pm UTC and its altitude is approximately 5,000 feet. See [UA2359 at 10:51pm UTC](#). These are the other planes that were in the sky at that time and almost certainly what OP was seeing in his video. See [OP's View at 10:51pm UTC](#). Furthermore, in the full video on OP's youtube post, four minutes in you can clearly hear the flight attendant announcing that the plane is "now above 10,000 feet" and then going on to talk about how wifi is available for purchase. See <https://youtu.be/9oKEink9NYQ?si=JbhSd5VUyCXIQN0k> This corresponds with the Flight24 data showing UA2359 at 12,900 feet at 10:55pm UTC. See [UA2359 at 10:55pm UTC](#). Notice at this time and for the next minute or so OP's video begins to only focus on one UAP at a lower altitude that on first view appears to be stationary but with context you will see that it is actually another plane that is moving in the same direction and then slowly moving away from UA2359 as it turns on its flight path to go land at ORD. What OP is seeing there is AA6047, an American Airlines flight from Des Moines to Chicago. See [All Planes Flight Radar at 10:55:26pm UTC](#) and [AA6047 at 10:55pm UTC](#).

Your post made me dig in and do the additional work to figure all this out so thanks for that. Now I know how to go about analyzing these claims in the future. And now I also understand why people constantly respond to UAP sightings saying "those are just planes." If I've made any errors feel free to correct me. I believe in extraterrestrial intelligence just as much as everyone else in this sub and would love to be proved wrong here.

Can someone sticky this so the community doesn't look even more deranged?

Θ Up 75 Down Award Share ...

# **Conclusion: How Distrust is Really Formed**

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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