

My Boyfriend Believed in Aliens

by Joey Delgado

My boyfriend unequivocally believed in the existence of aliens. He was the Mulder to my Scully, though when I said so, he had no idea what I was talking about. I never understood how someone so E.T. obsessed could have missed 'The X-Files'.

He would look skyward, eyes scanning up and down, flicking left to right. When possible, he made a full 360 degree turn so not a square inch of creamy blue or star-freckled black sky was missed by his hopeful, longing gaze.

Websites devoted to uncovering the mysteries of various UFO and alien sightings held no interest for him. When we were first dating and his belief began to reveal itself, I'd go home and research everything I could about aliens. Part of this was to ensure easy conversation, but mostly I just wanted to impress him. On our fourth or fifth date, at dinner, I brought up the legend of the mysterious Smiling Man, Roswell, Barney and Betty Hill. Nothing. He waved me off, insisting those famous stories of UFO sightings, alien encounters, and abductions were all fabrications made up by shameless attention seekers, conspiracy theorists, and hillbillies hopped up on moonshine and amphetamines. His dismissal of these stories confused me. "If you don't believe any of this shit," I said, "how are you so convinced they're out there?" He smiled and said, "I mean, how could they not be?"

One night, in bed, I asked another question. I asked why it was so important to him that aliens existed and would eventually make their way to Earth. The question felt intimate, almost invasive. Asking at a time when we were both disarmed and naked seemed right. It was

one of those questions that needed to be asked and answered when both parties were completely vulnerable. Maybe it was crazy, but watching him watch the sky, the rigid way he held his body, the saucer-wide eyes, it was clear this meant something to him. It was heartbreaking to behold.

"I don't care if they want to spread intergalactic peace or engage in total world domination," he said. "I don't care if they want to share their advanced technology or study us with it. I don't care if they body snatch our asses. I just want them to come. Sooner or later they're gonna come. I wish they'd fucking get it over with."

It was like he was waiting for an earthquake, the big one, or a car bomb to go off. He was always on edge. A psychiatrist prescribed benzodiazepines and I'd catch my boyfriend trying to surreptitiously take the pills throughout the day. "Love, you don't have to hide," I said. "If you need them, take them."

He disappeared a month before our fourth anniversary. There was no note and none of our friends or his family heard anything. His car was still parked on the street in front of our apartment building, his house keys hung from the hook by the front door, and right below that on our little entry table was his cell phone, still charging. The love of my life simply vanished.

A week after his disappearance, I got a telephone call from the L.A. County Sheriff's Department. A body closely matching my boyfriend's description in the missing person's report was found face down in a brook right off a popular hiking trail at the bottom of Crystal Canyon. There were no signs of decomposition and criss-crossed incisions on every inch of his body formed a sort of checkered grid. Later, I would find out his heart was missing.

I was the one who identified the body. When the coroner pulled back the sheet and revealed my boyfriend's handsome face, I winced. His

once midnight black hair had gone completely white and the corners of his mouth were slightly upturned into a faint smile. I knew that smile, had seen it before. He looked happy.

