

ALL PATHS LEAD TO GALACTIC DISSAPOINTMENT

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July 7, 2021

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Project Title: *All Paths Lead to Galactic Disappointment*

Inspirations: X-Files, Destination Truth, The Odd Couple, Disco Elysium

Logline: Curious but decrepit cryptid investigators unfold the recent allegations of alien activity on a shoestring budget and baseless morale.

Characters:

Narrator – The Player Character’s ‘Inner Critic’ who ridicules your actions, provides witty observations, and offers available player choices that will inevitably lead to your professional or personal downfall. They are also a staunch believer in aliens on Earth (think: “I’m not saying it’s aliens, but it’s aliens” guy).

Agent Alejandro – Agent of the ERD (Extraterrestrial Research Division), Alejandro *could* retire, but loves his job too much to stop now. Despite lack of government funding for the E.T. Program, and teasing by the FBI agents next-door, Alejandro enjoys searching for galactic phenomena with his partner (the Player Character), even if together they’ve never discovered definitive evidence of alien lifeforms on Earth.

Dazzline Jones – Witness #1 and Albuquerque’s most famous burlesque dancer, also known as The Dazzler.

Tom Brickwood – Witness #2 and Albuquerque’s local cryptid-hunter and co-host of the New Mexico Paranormal and Foodie Podcast

The Case:

Tom Brickwood posted to social media on the 6th about strange lights in the night sky: “Just east of town at Sandia Crest, 3 or 4 lights were darting through space, curving and bending. This wasn’t a satellite or plane. No explanations in mind, aside from UFO.”

This in itself wouldn’t spark curiosity—Tom being an unsubstantiated and frequent reporter of alien activity—but the reputable and famous burlesque dancer, Dazzline Jones, reported a similar sighting on the same night.

How choices work: Each scene will have a multitude of choices to establish player agency and voice, and two main choices that will propel the player forward into the next stage of their investigation (such as who they interview and what they investigate).

SCENE 001 – Introducing the Case

You and Agent Alejandro are in the Albuquerque FBI office’s coffee shop. Alejandro’s case notes are on the small circular table connecting your belly to his. He breaks down the details of the pending investigation to the nosy and judgmental attention of the FBI agents surrounding. The ERD are not looked upon with respect here.

FBI AGENT

Look, Boss, Bigfeet are at it again.

ALEJANDRO

(ignoring) According to Tom there were 3 lights. Dazzline reported 4. We will push this lead further later into the investigation.

FBI AGENT

Lights? That all? Ouch, they hurt your eyes or something? Wear sunglasses next time.

ALEJANDRO

I will. Thank you, agent.

FBI AGENT

Come on, Alejandro, you know we’re just playing around. I’d worry if you felt like we were ignoring you. Some attention is better than no attention, right?

ALEJANDRO

(ignoring) Tom went off-air about thirty minutes ago. We could catch him at his recording studio. Or Dazzline should be at the Deluxe Dance Room and Theatre. Who should we talk to?

Main Choices:

1. Interview Tom -> Scene 002a

2. Interview Dazzline -> Scene 002b

SCENE 002a – Interviewing Tom:

You meet Tom in his recording studio. The room is air conditioned, making for a nice reprieve from the New Mexico desert heat. Tom recognizes both of you; this not being your first time questioning him on UFO’s. Almost as if reading a script, Tom recounts the sighting beat for beat. He suggests traveling together to where he saw the UFO.

Main Choices:

1. *Take Tom to the scene of the sighting -> Scene 003b*
2. *Leave Tom, and go by yourselves -> Scene 003a*

SCENE 002b – Interviewing Dazzline:

Dazzline recognizes Alejandro from their shared experiences as performers in Albuquerque’s nightlife (Alejandro being a well-regarded drag queen by the name of October Ortiz). The familiarity seems to ease the tension in her shoulders. You press her about the sighting, and although her account seems interesting, everything could be explained away with a skeptic’s logic. She asks if you and Alejandro would like to stay and watch her performance.

Main Choices:

1. *Go to where the sighting took place -> Scene 003a*
2. *Stay and watch Dazzline’s performance -> Scene 003c*

SCENE 003a – The scene of the sighting:

Late afternoon sun reflects off the rocks in the valley below, turning Albuquerque into a glowing mass of white and orange lights. Here on the mountain, the air feels crisp, fresh; cool. A large pine tree shades you and Alejandro, while waves of tourists drive up the winding road behind to gawk at the scenic views. Alejandro pulls out a government issued, extendable metal detector from his bag and follows a makeshift perimeter.

Main Choices:

1. *This is a waste of time. Leave -> Scene 004a*
2. *Let him finish. Stay -> Scene 004b*

SCENE 003b – The scene of the sighting (with Tom):

Tom leads you to the exact spot of the sighting: A dirt bluff about fifty paces off the main road up the mountain. Marijuana butts litter the ground around your feet, as well as take-out containers from a place called “Juliet’s Noodle Bar.” Tom comments on the serenity of this place, musing over the breathtaking view of the sky. The afternoon sun prevents you from staring at it too long, but one can assume a peek at the stars from here would be an other-worldly experience.

Main Choices:

1. *This is a waste of time. Leave -> Scene 004a*

2. *Stay until nightfall -> Scene 004c*

SCENE 003c – Ending – The Performance of a Lifetime

A slow crowd trickles into the club and Dazzline unveils herself on the stage in vibrant lingerie. She looks like a firecracker as she dances and shakes to the onslaught of cheers and whistles. Alejandro is happy to see his friend basking in love and support.

The player can attempt to encourage Alejandro (October Ortiz) to get on stage as well for a variation on this ending. In either case, the narrator is disappointed you didn't find aliens, but at least you had a nice moment with your partner.

SCENE 004a – Leaving the scene:

Fed up or bored with the investigation, you decide to walk away. You stand awkwardly against the passenger side of the car. The door is locked and Alejandro has the keys. You wait for him to put away his gear and join you back at the car (Tom can also be here for this scene if you brought him). Alejandro stands beside you, forlorn. Perhaps this is it: The End. Is this what life has become? Simple investigations of ambiguous lights in the sky. And your partnership together: a hollow shell of its former enthusiasm.

Main Choices:

1. *Give up on the ERD -> Scene 005b*

2. *Keep with the ERD -> Scene 005c*

SCENE 004b – Alejandro finds metal:

Alejandro's metal detector's green light turns red, and a slow, rhythmic beep sounds off through its tinny speakers. Digging below the surface dust reveals a tiny disk of silvery material. Perfectly flat on the top and bottom, and in the shape of a circle, the object must have been precision engineered. Alien artifact? Alejandro throws it on the ground. What is he doing? This could be your evidence.

Main Choices:

1. *Pursue this lead. Pick up the metal -> scene 005a*

2. *Call it quits. Leave -> scene 004a*

SCENE 004c – Ending – Wish on a Shooting Star

Tom, Alejandro and you wait for darkness, while one-by-one stars appear in the sky. In the city proper, you'd never be able to see such a grand vision of the Milky Way, the planets and the emptiness beyond. Some questions fill the void between you three, but mostly you share a sight: Whatever you interpret the space beyond to be. Aliens? God? Nothing? A shooting star crests the horizon, and if you so choose, you may make a wish.

SCENE 005a – Ending – Analysis of the Mysterious Metal:

Excited, you retrieve the disk of metal and submit it to the official government lab. 3 months later the results are in: The mysterious metal was a worn-down quarter. Although disappointing, there's always next time to find alien evidence. You know it's out there somewhere and it's your job to find it.

SCENE 005b – What is life without the ERD:

You need something else in life. Hunting aliens on the outskirts of town no longer interest you. It's time for a change. But what comes next?

(if Tom is here he suggests you and Alejandro record your own paranormal podcast series, and he will produce it in his studio)

Main Choices:

- 1. Request a transfer to the FBI – Scene 006a*
- 2. Retire with Alejandro ->Scene 006b*
- 3. (if Tom is here) Record your own podcast series with Alejandro -> Scene 006c*

SCENE 005c – Continuing with the ERD:

It's easier to keep on your current path, even if you're unsatisfied with your outlook in life. Change—deviation from a routine—requires great patience and courage. Or maybe you actually enjoy the fruitless hunts for aliens on Earth. Whatever your motivation may be, you're sticking with the ERD. This investigation was a dud, but it's always possible the next one will turn up the evidence you've long sought after.

(if Tom is here he will suggest coming back to guest star on his podcast)

Main Choices:

- 1. Go back to your offices and wait for another case. ->End*
- 2. (if Tom is here) Guest on Tom's podcast -> Scene 006d*

SCENE 006a – Ending – The FBI’s New Recruit

Alejandro keeps his job as the sole agent of the ERD, while you transfer to the FBI. Your new office, although not fancy for FBI standards, runs laps around your old broom closet shared with Alejandro. You still see him eagerly looking through case notes in the coffee shop, but now you’re on the sidelines snickering away with your new workplace family.

SCENE 006b – Ending – Retiring in Mexico

This was the push you two needed. You and Alejandro officially retire—putting an end to the ERD program—and move south to Mexico. Alejandro’s aunt from Mexico City visits on the weekends, and teaches you how to make authentic tamales. Only on clear starry nights do you even remember your previous life as an investigator in the E.T. Program.

SCENE 006c – Ending – The Cryptid Network’s #2 Premiere Podcast

You and Alejandro retire from the ERD to start a new cryptid podcast. It has 40+ weekly listeners. It’s revitalized Alejandro. He hasn’t looked this happy and healthy in ten years.

SCENE 006d – Ending – A New Lead

Guest starring on Tom’s podcast causes a frenzy of new reports. Apparently having two government agents from the Extraterrestrial Research Division is a big deal in the cryptid world. With more people are wanting to share their stories, you and Alejandro have quite a few new leads in your never-ending search for alien lifeforms on Earth.