

The Truth Is Out There

By Curtis Chang

The scene is a dorm room with bowls of popcorn and drinks littered about. Three students are watching TV. Ohene and Gene are sitting on chairs, with Teresa sitting in between them. Gene has his arms around Teresa.

Ohene clicks off the TV and he and Gene lean back and blow out sighs, indicating they are stunned.

Ohene: Man, that was intense! Gene, now do you see that...

Gene: Whoa, wait I've got to think, I've got to think... why was there that business card from that government agency lying on the floor... I've got to think...

Ohene: That was so intense. Gene, Gene, when the guy changed suddenly changed his facial features and he goes like (makes a funny sound). Don't you think that proves that Mulder actually saw the alien like he claimed...

Gene: Wait, I've got to think... see I think that card means Scully is right. It's all part of that secret agency's secret research...

Ohene: No way! That was just a red herring! Didn't you hear what that scientist from the agency that Mulder met said, what was it, "There's stuff going on that we can't account for."

Gene: Oh please, don't be so naive, Ohene. And you're going to believe that guy? He obviously was covering something up!

Ohene: How do you know he was covering something up? He was risking a lot just to meet with Mulder. Think about it, if he wasn't convinced that there really was an alien presence, what was his motive for giving Mulder the information?

Gene: He was lying! You could tell by his shifty eyes. And remember that he picked up the phone right after Mulder left?

Ohene: What? When did he do that? He didn't pick up the phone!

Gene: Yes he did, it was the last scene before they cut to a... um... that, that Taco Bell commercial. Dead giveaway that he was lying.

Meanwhile, Teresa is watching this dialogue like an observer at a tennis match. Finally, she raises her finger and speaks tentatively.

Teresa: Why are you guys getting so worked up over this? It's just a show.

Gene and Ohene stare at her incredulously. Ohene then stares at Gene questionly. Gene removes his arm around Teresa and looks awkward.

Gene: It's.. it's her first X-Files, Ohene. She's never watched the show before.

Ohene shakes his head disbelievingly.

Teresa: And boy have I missed out! You guys, this show is kind of silly. Aliens or government conspiracy theory? I'm sorry, but I do have more useful ways to spend my time and energy than on this raging debate.

Ohene: And Gene, you wonder if you two are compatible or not?

Teresa (hitting Gene): What do you mean, "wonder if we're compatible or not?"

While Gene is protesting his innocence, Nayiri suddenly bursts in.

Nayiri: Oh my gosh, oh my gosh, oh my gosh! Did you hear that in your room?

Gene: Hear what, Nayiri? Hey look, Teresa, Nayiri's here (trying to redirect Teresa's attention).

Nayiri: That sound! Like this (makes a strange sound). Oh my gosh, are you sure you didn't hear anything? You guys, I think I'm going crazy! I'm in my room alone, watching X-Files, OK? And right after, I'm telling you it was right after that last scene when the guy changes his features (makes that sound again), I go to the bathroom 'cause that scene freaked me out so much. And I'm in the bathroom, and I swear I hear that exact same sound. It was like coming from right above me!

Teresa: Nayiri, it was probably just coming from the TV.

Nayiri: I turned the TV off!!!!!!

Ohene: Oh my gosh...

Nayiri: I was so freaking out that I just stood there to afraid to move. Then I heard that same sound again, and then like a whooshing sound. And then, a few seconds later, I heard a thud, like something had landed outside. You guys didn't hear any of this?

Teresa: Nothing. We were busy talking.

Ohene: Oh my gosh...

Nayiri: What was worse is that there was like no one home in my hallway. The whole floor was completely deserted. I was so scared, I kept thinking about that one episode when those

people are getting abducted by the aliens. That's when I came running down to your floor to find you guys.

Ohene: Oh my gosh...

Gene: You say it sounded like something landed outside?

Nayiri: Yea, something heavy. There was that whoosing sound and then a thud!

Ohene: Oh my gosh...

Teresa: Well, you stop that already!

Gene walks over to the window and looks out.

Ohene: Gene, don't stick your head too far out. You don't know what's out there.

Gene: Nayiri, you live on the top floor, right?

Nayiri: Yea, so?

Gene: Well, the truth really is out there. It's called the South Hall Effect. There's a piece of the roof lying out on the grass.

Nayiri and Ohene run over and look out the window. They turn back, both relieved but also a little dejected.

Ohene: Oh, man, for a moment there, I thought maybe... well, that we really were going to see...

Gene: Like I keep telling you, Ohene, Scully is right. There's a scientific explanation for all that stuff. You just gotta' keep your cool and sift through the evidence.

Nayiri: Well, mister pre-med, it could've been an alien landing. Stuff like that does happen and there's just a lot of evidence that they really happen. Stonehenge, those crop markings in South America, all those people's stories of being abducted. Last week, I went to go hear this professor of psychology at Harvard give a talk. He'd studied all those people's stories and he says there's no other scientific explanation for all their stories except that they were telling the truth. You just can't explain away all those people's stories.

Ohene: Nayiri's right. I just read this book about the pyramids in Egypt by this engineer, and he claimed that the construction techniques required for the pyramids could not have possibly existed at that time. And the pyramids all pointed to the exact planetary positions of...

Teresa: I don't get it! Ohene, you are always complaining that you've got so much reading to do for your class and yet you're reading some crazy book about the pyramids. And you Nayiri, you don't make it for lectures in classes you're getting graded on -- what are you doing traipsing down to Harvard to hear some kooky professor? I don't get you guys! How is any of this stuff

useful at all? Why do you waste so much time trying to figure out whether there actually are aliens or it's all a conspiracy! What difference does any of this make?

Ohene: What difference does this make? Teresa, what if there is this whole other reality out there? What if the truth really is out there? Aren't you curious? Don't you want to know the truth?

Teresa: Not if the truth isn't going to make a difference in my life. I've got more important things to worry about.

Nayiri: But it does make a difference! What if we're not alone? Doesn't that change everything? What if all our history -- like the pyramids or Stonehenge -- can only be explained by the fact that we are not alone? What if our future is wrapped up with other beings? I think about that when I'm studying IR and reading about how messed up we are with war and AIDS and pollution and stuff. I think, "We keep screwing stuff up by ourselves, what if there were, like, superior beings or something that could help us out of this mess. What if we're not left alone?"

Teresa: But you can't count on that. It's unrealistic to hope for something like that.

Ohene: I don't know, Teresa, but don't you ever want to hope for something more than what seems realistic? When Nayiri came running down here, I got this tingle down my spine. I was a little freaked out, but I also was excited. More excited than I usually get. What if finally there is something more than just another round of studying, sleeping, eating, studying, sleeping, eating? What if we were going to finally witness something totally new and different? Something more... more... more meaningful?