

What happened at the RNC.
Based on a written account in the early 1990s.

You say, TELL ME A STORY ABOUT THE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION.

I swear to you, something extraordinary happened there. You may not believe it now, but you might by the time you finish reading this. Seeing is believing. Adults do neither easily, but children do both. A young girl witnessed everything.

It was in Detroit in 1980, the middle of July, at Detroit's new Joe Louis Arena. The great boxer Joe Louis had died three months earlier, and for Detroiters an aura of pride emanated from the entire facility. Because of the Republican Convention, the national spotlight shone on the city. It seemed like the entire galaxy was watching Detroit.

A lot of the RNC attendees, including Ronald Reagan and Jerry Ford, stayed in the shiny hotel cylinders of the Renaissance Center, walking distance on Jefferson Avenue from the Joe. The young girl was skipping ahead of her parents when she saw on the sidewalk before her two creatures with large heads, huge dark eyes, and thin lips.

STOP RIGHT THERE. ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT ALIENS?

Yes. Alien abduction.

THAT'S NUTS. THAT DESCRIPTION SOUNDS LIKE A CARTOON. LIKE EVERY OTHER DESCRIPTION OF ALIENS THAT'S EVER BEEN MADE.

Of course. That's because they're all the same species. All the descriptions sound the same because that's what they all look like. Just like all flowers look like flowers and all fish look like fish. All people look like people.

EVERY FISH DOESN'T LOOK LIKE EVERY OTHER FISH. YOU CAN'T EXPECT ANYONE TO BELIEVE YOU WITHOUT MORE DETAIL.

That's not what the girl was thinking about at the time. Everything happened so fast.

She saw a beam of light come down from the sky. She traced the beam to a large silver object hovering over Windsor, Canada on the other side of the Detroit River. The light beam pulsed faster and faster and moved closer and closer until the girl was in it, in the beam of light. It was so bright, she closed her eyes. She couldn't control herself. She was sucked up into the aircraft.

THIS WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A STORY ABOUT THE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION.

It is, it is.

Inside the craft she opened her eyes. The creatures stood all around. They were too many to count, but she guessed there were about twenty. They were communicating in some language she'd never heard. She knew they were talking about her because they were looking at her. They put her on a glass table and strapped her ankles and wrists to it, and they rigged machines with crystal levers to her head and

chest. They examined her thoroughly. She had no idea what they were looking for; she just hoped they found it soon and sent her back home.

WHAT ABOUT THE TWO ALIENS THAT SHE SAW WHEN SHE WAS SKIPPING ON THE SIDEWALK?

We'll get to that.

After what seemed to her a few days, the ship made a quick turn. They turned on the beam of light and put her into it. She floated in the light beam, and then it went back to the ground.

HOW COULD SHE KNOW THE SHIP TURNED? SHE WENT THREE DAYS WITHOUT EATING? WHAT HAPPENED TO ALL THAT TIME?

She felt the entire ship shift, like when you're in a car or on a boat. It felt like three days, but she didn't know. She had no clear memory of the time. Like when you're sleeping. You know time passes, but you have to look at a clock to know how much.

The beam of light returned her to the exact spot she'd been taken from on the sidewalk outside the RenCen. She ran to her parents. She was scared to death. She was crying and shaking. She couldn't tell them what happened because no words would come out of her mouth. When she finally did get the words out, they laughed at her. "You watch too many television shows," her parents said.

THERE YOU GO, RIGHT THERE.

She was so shaken up that they went home. At home, she told her big sister. "That's stupid," her sister said. "You have quite some imagination," her parents said. They had her explain again to see if her story changed. It didn't.

WOULDN'T THERE BE MARKS ON HER BODY FROM BEING EXAMINED?

There were. There were marks on her wrists and ankles. "You must have gotten them while you were playing," her parents said. "What about the odd bruises on my chest? They came from playing, too?"

WEREN'T HER PARENTS RIGHT THERE? DIDN'T THEY SEE HER GET BEAMED UP?

Her parents said they were watching her the whole time, and they said they didn't see anything. Maybe the aliens did something so that her parents didn't see or remember. Maybe they froze time so it only seemed to her parents that they were watching. Nobody knows what they can do.

The girl couldn't sleep at night for weeks. Her stomach was too upset to eat and she was scared to leave the house. She cried constantly. She jumped at every noise.

SHE SHOULD SEE A DOCTOR.

That's what her parents thought, too. They thought she was making things up to get attention, so they took her to a doctor. A mental doctor. The doctor didn't believe in aliens, but she didn't think the girl was looking for attention, either. She found that the girl had been traumatized. The doctor didn't know why and she couldn't find anything wrong. She couldn't explain the bruises on the girl's chest and the marks on her wrists

and ankles. The doctor was dealing with something she'd never seen before.

Something like aliens.

The girl was crushed that her parents and sister didn't believe her. Almost half of all Americans believe in aliens, and almost a third believe that aliens have made contact with us. If so many people believe in aliens when they don't have proof, why couldn't the girl's family believe her when she was living proof?

JUST BECAUSE PEOPLE BELIEVE SOMETHING DOESN'T MAKE IT TRUE.
YOU SHOULDN'T BELIEVE SOMETHING JUST BECAUSE OTHER PEOPLE DO.
WOULD YOU JUMP OFF A BRIDGE IF EVERYONE ELSE DID?

Believing in aliens is not like jumping off a bridge. Some respectable people believed in aliens. Eddie Vedder, Jimi Hendrix, John Lennon.

RESPECTABLE?!

The girl tried to understand why her family didn't believe her. They may have been afraid of the aliens. They may have been scared to think that aliens are here with us. They could be afraid of what people will think about them if they admit that they believe in aliens. Would you be afraid if you saw strange creatures on the sidewalk?

I'M NOT WORRIED; I'M NOT GOING TO SEE ANY.

We shouldn't be scared. Think of all the people who've seen them and describe them the same way. Don't ignore them. They've been here a long time. They've always been with us.

CAN WE GET BACK TO THE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL CONVENTION.

Written by K.G. Jones.

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Okay.

Future President Ronald Reagan, former President Gerald Ford, and an entourage of politicians and media left Detroit's Renaissance Center and walked down Jefferson on their way to the RNC at Cobo Arena. On the sidewalk before them sat two creatures with large heads, huge dark eyes and thin lips. They wore shabby clothing and held up a crude cardboard sign that read **PLEASE HELP GOD BLESS YOU**. They sought the eyes of Ronald Reagan and Jerry Ford, the eyes of anyone, *anyone*, but nobody saw them except a young girl.

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