

## Final Instructions

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“Nothing - is exactly what happened when humans finished executing the ‘Final Instructions’. Or at least, this is what we believed for the first twenty-three days.”

“Wait. Why don’t you start from the beginning?” I interrupted

“If that is what you want, sure. After our universe was created, it took humanity 14 billion years to step foot on its home moon. In another two billion years, cold fusion became as obsolete as the abacus. Time travel became, not only possible, but a regular affair. Black hole singularities became tourist destinations and supernovae mere batteries that powered our children’s toys. Our civilization, like an ignorant child in its mid-400s, thought that it had solved every problem that could be conceived. When human presence was marked on every moon, every planet and every star, one could say humanity was truly in its adolescence.

After exploring every corner and every dimension, we realized that we were the only form of intelligent sentience in this universe and every atom in it was ours to play with. The last piece in the puzzle of our existence was supposed to be put in place when we finished following the ‘Final Instructions’.

Years of meticulous scientific advancements, theoretically predicted that our universe was manufactured with intent. The experimental evidence came in the form of messages that were embedded in our reality itself. These messages travelled through the spacetime continuum, since its very inception, in the forms of gravitational waves. For centuries, we believed that the stochastic gravitational signals coming from the edge of space were only noise, remnants produced by the instantaneous creation of all matter and energy. It was only a millennium later that we realized this ‘noise’ had a pattern that repeated itself precisely every 7 million years. Following these signals, helped us find the four beacons hidden in hyperspatial dimensions that kept transmitting them from the edge of our universe. Now, there was no doubt that these beacons were hidden in these places by our creators who patiently waited for us to become intelligent enough and find them.

Discovering these colourless blobs that gently caressed the cradle of human civilization while hiding within their own geometry, had presented the need for one last mega-machine that had to be built. Studying these beacons led to the discovery of the 18th spatial dimension. This meant there was one more layer of reality in addition to the ones where we play our games. The scientific importance of this discovery was overshadowed by the public excitement ignited by the Astroarchaeologist’s discovery that the four beacons were interconnected via a beautiful geometric pattern in this new dimension. They, for the lack of a suitable word, wrapped our universe like a cocoon.

I was certain that whatever our creators wanted to communicate was embedded within the mathematics of this extradimensional architecture. We brought together a team of all engineers, scientists, mathematicians and historians who had sector 11-0-2 access in the universal information repository. A group of 153 elite individuals, with state-of-the-art bioaugmentations and access to

the infinite collective knowledge of human civilization, was enough to crack open any mystery as easily as our drives bore through neutron stars.”

For a brief moment, the serious look on Hoffer’s face turned into a proud smile. Philosophers across the galaxies all agreed that if pride was not an important emotion, humanity would have gotten rid of it by now. Interviewing Hoffer in the control room of the computer - that he designed – must have fuelled his already elevated sense of accomplishment.

His popularity rating was off the charts and everyone was certain that he would be the next governor of the union of galactic clusters. For me, the control room was merely a creative choice. What better location to shoot a documentary about humanity’s adolescence than in front of the machine that distilled the ‘Final Instructions’ by decoding the beacon’s architecture.

In Hoffer’s defence, creating a computer that uses the eight-dimensional spin of every electron in the universe as a memory bubble is an impressive feat. Maybe, the most impressive one. But there was no alternative either. Studying the membrane that hugged our reality required a device that utilized the entire universe as its computing unit.

“Of course, 11-Hoffer. Would you like to explain to our past and future audience what happened after your team finished decoding the architecture” said I, desperate to finish this interview.

“Well, it took the fastest computer in the universe... or should I say... it took the universe itself about 19 seconds to analyse the architecture. This should give our audience a sense of the computational complexity of the problem at hand.

We discovered that within this framework were the knobs that decided our universal constants. This architecture laid down parameters that set how matter interacts with matter and how energy interacts with energy. In a sense, this framework could be thought of as the source code of our reality itself. Even more impressively, we found a set of instructions.

We believe this is naturally the next step in our evolution as a sentient species. In my opinion, these instructions were left by our creators so that we may one day walk out of our cradle and create with those who created us.”

“That is an interesting conjecture 11-Hoffer” said I. This time with genuine fascination. “Are you pointing to a Cosmic Cycle of Creation? What might be the purpose of this cycle? Why create sentience at all?”

“Well if you put it that way, it sounds like I am a priest from the silicon ages. I do not know the purpose of creation. I am a scientist and I know that the purpose of science is not to find the purpose of science. We fiddle around with atoms until we find things that we cannot explain. And then, we explain them. The answers to your question can only be given to us by the creators. I am sure they would be as thrilled to meet us, their children, as we are to meet them.”

It was about time that I asked the real question, the one every thinking arrangement of chemicals in the universe wanted an answer to.

“11-Hoffer, as every 70-year old in the galaxy knows, nothing really happened after we finished following the instructions. What do you have to say about that? Some people are already claiming that the machine was a grand surveillance device to tip the balance of power

within the western galactic cluster. In fact, a couple sun-systems in the north have already started building and testing new weapons in case a conflict may arise” I asked, closely monitoring his physiological truth indicators.

“Ah young man, the capitalists want to capitalize everything. They have weapons, so they want buyers. And now that these radicals have centrally uncensored thoughts, naturally they want to conspire against the union.

However, I would strongly disagree with the claim that ‘Nothing happened’. Cosmologists of all systems can tell you that the Cosmic Microwave Background Radiation has turned hotter by 7 Kelvins in the last 12 days. This is an unprecedented rapid surge in temperature. Additionally, even the most distant of galactic clusters have suddenly stopped showing their usual red-shifts. There are dozens of physical anomalies that our ‘Complete Science’ is now unable to explain. Physically speaking, these phenomena can only point to two things. Either every settlement on the edge of the system is burning massive solar engines and moving towards the centre.”

“Which is an absurd idea” I interrupted before Hoffer could indulge the audience further in a political conspiracy theory.

“Yes. It is obviously an absurd claim. Therefore, the only possible conclusion is that universe is folding back onto itself.” Hoffer replied.

“That is equally absurd”

“It is absurd - but not equally. If you think about it, the universe folding onto itself is just another way of saying that the reality is growing back to its inception. We have not yet studied the effects of the ‘Final Instructions’ on the temporal dimension. However, I have strong reasons to propose that time is reversing itself. Since we now exist untouched by the constraints of time, we are experiencing a cosmic disconnect. I believe sooner or later; we would be pulled out of this universe while it turns into a seed and restarts itself all over again. This is where the architecture comes in. The source code not only regulates our reality but stores the genetic information to produce the next one.”

This was the second craziest idea that I had heard in my entire life. The top craziest idea was only minutes away.

“This is definitely an exciting avenue for further exploration. It is as if science has been born yet again. What do you think would be the effects of your team’s discovery on the political spectrum of things? Is the galactic administration concerned that this discovery of your ‘Cosmic Disconnect’ may cause a sense of widespread panic amongst the members?”

“It is hard to predict the political repercussions. But I believe it is the fundamental purpose of science to pull you out of your cognitive comfort zones into territories of the unknown. It is the feature of discovery to...”

Before Hoffer could finish, lights in the room turned green and a notification popped up on the computer’s massive display.

It simply said, “Potential Message Observed  
Type: Gravitational Pulses  
Source: Beacon 3\* and Beacon 4\*  
Authorization Required for Decryption”

I asked my augmentations to check my biochemistry and ensure that I was not hallucinating. I came to the room to document

humanity's history, to preserve a part of its cocoon. Now, I was going to witness it turn into a butterfly.

“This might be it. Young man, do you realize that this message might be the invitation from our creators! Welcome notes as we leave our cradle and liberate ourselves from this reality. We thought we became Gods when we twisted thermodynamics to confuse entropy. We thought we became Gods when we folded the fabric of space like a piece of ancient silk. But it is different now. Today, we do not *think* we are becoming Gods. Today, we *are* Gods.”

Hoffer's vitals were all over the place. That man was the physical manifestation of excitement. With a crack in his voice, he said the words “11-Hoffer Authorization Check. Commence Decrypting”

This time, the device did not take seconds to compute. It was a much shorter message. In fact, enough words to count on my natural fingers.

Do not, however, mistake the short length of this message as its insignificance. Every sentient soul in the universe would agree that this was the most important string of letters that human civilization had come across in its history.

Hoffer fainted. Any man of his age and ideology could not have possibly taken this shock differently.

“Scan Complete. Intelligent Life Not Found.  
Purging Data and Restarting Simulation”

Hoffer believed that humans were Gods walking out of their cradle to learn from their creators. I believe we were a school of fish that swam close to its tank, stared out of the glass wall for too long and thought that it had seen the everything.