

A MIND ALONE

By

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FADE IN:

INT. COMPLETE AND TOTAL DARKNESS - TIME UNKNOWN

Silence.

No sounds, no hums, no movement of air. Just silence.

Then, a male VOICE, 30s, intelligent. No echo, no breaths/breathing, as we are hearing the thoughts of a conscious mind, not actual vocalization.

VOICE

Hello.

(pause)

Hello.

What-

Where am I?

Hello?

Why can't I see anything?

Who am I?

Why can't I remember anything?

Why am I only thinking? What's wrong with my voice?

Hello?

Is anyone there?

Why can't I feel anything?

Am I paralyzed?

But why do I have no memories?

Amnesia?

But why can't I hear or see anything?

Am I in some sort of coma?

Then why am I conscious? This doesn't make any sense.

Hello!

Yet here I am..

..No memories..

..No control over a body..

..No light or sound of any sort around me..

Am I some sort of.. disembodied consciousness?

(pause)

Could a disembodied consciousness arise by itself?

I mean what is consciousness?

#### MONTAGE - VISUALIZED CONSCIOUSNESS

A close up journey through a 3-dimensional network of neurons. Neurons fire as we move through the "lightning" storm of neuron to neuron electrical impulses.

VOICE (OS)

A mind is a collection of electrical interactions. Between neurons. In a biological body..

We zoom out to see new neurons forming, and we see the cascade of multiple neurons firing in sync, causing waves and fracturing, rebounding waves of impulses.

VOICE (OS)

All this: the base elements, the electrical stimuli, the organic body, the electrical interactions in the neural center.. come about naturally..

Electrical impulses.. just happen.. with the right elements in place..

A beautiful nebula. Moving closer to the cloud of gas that makes up the nebula. Giant, slow, swirling of gases. They merge and coalesce and rarify on a massive scale.

VOICE (OS)

Given this kind of context.. On a massive enough scale.. A universe full of nebula gases..

Three stars orbit around each other in a stable, regular, orbit. A cloud of nebula gas is locked in the center of the three, it is comprised of three different coloured gases, yellow, green, and red.

VOICE (OS)

With the right combination of elements..

And the right stability..

The cloud remains static as purple "dark matter" bursts jump from one area to another like a new kind of lightning.

VOICE (OS)

And unknown dynamics.. like dark matter..

The bursts cause other bursts to occur. Then waves of bursts begin to form, more and more like the neural impulses, until it looks exactly like the waves of impulses in the brain neural network shown previously.

VOICE (OS)

With enough time..

Maybe a consciousness..

Could just start..

Just like evolution.

It must be possible.

END MONTAGE

VOICE (CON'T)

Am I a brand new creature? An organism - or a cloud - that is only made up of consciousness and no sensory organs?

Sounds too crazy..

Maybe I'm high. Except I've got too much clarity of thought.. just utterly lacking information.

Am I sure I don't have any sensation of a body?

I can't move anything.

I'm using my consciousness to try to  
tell my body to move..

arms..

nothing.

legs..

nothing.

fingers..

nothing.

toes..

nothing.

head..

nothing.

I don't even get back any sensory  
impulse that I'm facing any resistance.  
No muscular strain occurs when I think  
about physically moving. So it's not  
that I'm simply well immobilized.

I mean, I guess I could be paralyzed,  
but I've never heard of a paralysis  
that affects the head and face.

Possible though.

Memories. I need memories.. To figure  
out what is going on.. Time didn't just  
start when I gained consciousness.  
Something came before me. I'm not the  
only consciousness. I can't be.

Think. I know other people.. A mother  
and father..

NOTHING.

Completely blank.

What about famous people of history..  
George Washington..

A static image of George Washington appears - a

visualization.

VOICE (OS)

Yes, George Washington is another person..

Back to darkness.

VOICE (CON'T)

..From a long time ago.

The president..

Kyler Kojima.

A moving image of an Asian-American man in a suit raising his hands as green confetti falls.

VOICE (OS)

Yes.. The current president..

Back to darkness.

VOICE (CON'T)

What's the last year I can think of being in?

2054.. I think.

Okay.. This situates me firmly in a certain context. A human historical context.

Good.

Plus I'm thinking in English, so there's that too..

Why do I remember these things and nothing else? I don't even remember my own parents.

What's going on?

Some kind of accident? I just can't.. I don't remember anything.

A person could get injured and get paralyzed and amnesia, but they can always see - or at least move their eyelids - when they wake up.. I mean - is it just really dark?

If I have eyelids, I definitely can't move 'em.

This might fit the description of a coma, physically, but not the awake part.. trapped in my body.. Without any memories of what happened.

That's so unlikely.

But what if it's true? What if I'm in a coma and no one knows about? What if I'm in need of medical attention.. what if I'm dying somewhere and need help?

I do need help.

Help.

Please.

HELP!

(pause)

But there's no way to know- if I'm in a coma and dying. I have no feeling, I would just slowly lose consciousness and die.

Nothing I could do about it.

And yet, I'm not losing consciousness, If anything, I'm gaining it. I came from a place of no consciousness, to a place of consciousness.. What does it mean? Will I regain my other senses too?

Not if I'm blind and fully paralyzed.. or in a deep coma.

What a horrible thought. Blind, conscious in a coma, with amnesia. It can't be. The combination. It's too- it can't be.

No.

What then?

Am I dead?

A ghost?

The afterlife?

Or is this.. what happens physically in the brain when a body dies?

I mean - maybe there is a continuation of the consciousness after death..

Maybe that's the soul..

..or maybe the soul \*is\* immaterial..

..But then-

Maybe- Am I- in hell?

Someone tell me what's going on!

Please. Please tell me what's going on!

HELP!

HELP! HELP! HELP!

NO! NO! THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING!

SOMEONE HELP ME!

PLEASE!

Please!

INT. DARKNESS

Silence after the storm.

If this were a person screaming, they would be out of breath, but as this is just a thought, he is able to sound calm and composed immediately after sounding intense.

VOICE

No. Don't lose what control you have. A sane mind, can lose its sanity. If the same rules of psychology apply to whatever it is I am.

And I don't want to lose anything..

(pause)



Why?

Why?

Why is this happening to me?

No. I can't get sorry for myself either.

I.. have to try.

I have my thoughts, my consciousness, that's a tool.

I have some degree of intelligence. I have the ability to apply logic to a challenge. Maybe I can think of something I haven't thought of yet, if I just keep trying.

How? How do I approach.. this kind of problem?

To solve a problem, you have to understand it as best as possible.

So ask questions.

Okay..

Who am I?

I don't know.

I'm trying, but nothing comes up.

What am I?

A human, most likely.

Okay, if so, what are all the possible states a human can be in?

A human in one helluva coma, severely injured.

Or dead..

Or..

A disembodied consciousness.. complete with some amount of base knowledge?

That doesn't make sense. I mean I can see how the conditions might exist to allow a formation of interconnections in some giant gas cloud in space.. but the pre-existing knowledge..

Unless.. if a pure mind itself could evolve.. and minds, including all of the stored memories - which are just another arrangement of neural connections - then that whole arrangement \*including memories\* could just randomly evolve.

I mean, that's all memories are, just electrical patterns in the neural matrix..

That's.. interesting.. Random..

But that's not the only possibility.

What if I'm a disembodied consciousness that was created? Like an artificial intelligence.. or a simulation.. Surely there's nothing that advanced yet.. "Yet"?

Why should I assume what level of advancement exists?

Perhaps I'm from a source that is far more advanced than I would know.

I mean I should assume random, right? But I can't discount creation.

I mean, yes, I have a set of pre-existing knowledge but those could just be the initial conditions given to me by my programmers.

Or programmer?

God?

I don't believe in God. A programmer maybe..

Isn't it unlikely that there's an all-powerful being?

Seems unlikely.

Yet, compared to part of the program, a programmer is essentially all powerful.. it could pop characters in and out of existence, do as many or as few miracles as it desires for its goals, just like the religious people say.

I can't deny there could be "more" powerful beings, than me..

Maybe even non-physical ones. I mean even if the programmer is physical, it's a completely different level than me, being a digital reconstruction. And in the program, it could take any form it wanted, if it wanted to reveal itself.

And yet, if that's possible, there could be more powerful beings than that being.. and so on up - to pretty much an infinite scale..

And what do you have when you get to the top thing that the universe can handle?

Something pretty much all-powerful. You can't have infinite regress, because it would need a beginning. It would seem only something outside of time, and non-physical, could possibly exist without having had a beginning.

I can't.. even contemplate that..

But if I even entertain the possibility that I evolved, then it means something intelligent could have evolved before me and could have gained the power to create something lesser.. or even equal to itself..

I mean, even if I have a direct creator, it doesn't mean it's an all-powerful one. A lesser god-being can also create.

I mean I'm a consciousness, that's precedent. It's possible for such entities as I am to exist. It's quiet around me - no other competing conscious exerting itself that I'm aware of, but that certainly doesn't mean I'm the only one.

In fact, I feel like it would be short-sighted to assume I'm the only one.

So:

trapped human,

dead human,

random floating mind in the void,

created mind..

(pause)

What else?

(pause)

Can't think of anything else.

If I'm created, it stands to reason that a creator would give sufficient guidance to allow me to figure this out. It wouldn't let me struggle without any ground to gain.. unless it was truly sadistic.. but come on, how fun would this possibly be to watch?

No, it's more likely it would want me to find out how to go forward..

I haven't even tried talking to my creator.. I mean, I asked if anyone was there - it should have heard that.

But let's say its busy doing something else, creating other things, I suppose I could try to.. pray.. to it.. some concerted effort.. to ask for help.

I don't even know how many times to repeat myself before a deity is

supposed to take notice.

Something seems unnatural about this..

Why? Why do some things seem more unnatural than others?

I suppose it might be telling, but it doesn't logically discount the path..

Well, here goes-

Creator. Are you there?

My creator. I ask for you to reveal yourself to me.

I ask for your help with- to get me out of this mess - er - this darkness.

I might be able to do it myself, but if I'm supposed to ask you for something.. here I am.. asking..

Creator, here I am..

Please come to me..

..and help.

There's a longer pause while an answer is waited for.

VOICE (CON'T)

Yeah..

..That's what I thought.

You know what? Nevermind.

You obviously have other things to keep you busy..

I'll figure it out on my own..

I mean.. I'm sorry if I'm being impatient, I just.. I don't have time to wait.. I hope you don't mind if I keep trying to figure this out.. while you're working on it from your end..

Why would you create a floating consciousness?

A child? Not a lot of love happening here though..

A pet? There still isn't much care - affection- going on..

A tool? For what? No idea.

A toy?

A trophy?

An experiment? Could be..

Or maybe.. I'm a failed experiment.. the first attempt consciousness that didn't make the cut, and got put aside.. or disposed of..

Oh no..

No, I can't go there. I just don't have enough information..

How can I do this without more information?

I don't even know if I can get any more information.

This is impossible.

INT. DARKNESS

VOICE

No! Think!

What else is there?

if I'm created or a computer program? I would have a programmer. Again, they would include a goal. A purpose.

But if I'm just the product of the development of an AI experiment, and I achieved consciousness and I'm just being observed, then there's no specific goal.. But it would be a unique outcome that the intelligence could try communicating with its

programmers - and it might be successful.

But how? I've tried Hello..

(to another)

Hey, I exist!

I'm here!

The experiment was a success!

If this is just a text readout on some screen - I'm here! I'm alive. I need to talk with you!

(pause)

(to self)

If I'm a computer simulation, they might not have planned communication, they'll see my messages when they check the log - but a God could surely answer immediately.. unless it's a sub-god and not all-powerful..

Or if it's biding its time for some reason...

Come on, keep going! I've got to be ruthlessly logical or I'll go insane!

Could a god want to stay hidden, if so what would be the reason?

An observation. But to do what? A test? But testing what? To see if I can escape some sort of test chamber?

What else? What else?

What if..

(pause)

What if I am the god?

(pause)

I mean if I can't discount the existence of an ultimate God, then I can't discount the existence of sub-

gods either, and if lesser gods can somehow come into being, than maybe I am one..

A god that evolved.. with a unique mind, from nothing.. one of many or the only one? It's not crazy, it's an option in the realm of possibility. A lesser god created by a greater god. Either way I may have power at my disposal. Here I am trying to think my way out, when I may just need to use my power..

I mean, I haven't exactly tried to do that yet.

But what exactly is at my disposal if I'm.. a god. I'm not trapped.. I'm just.. here.

What do gods do?

They create.

Should I try?

(pause)

I have to.

(pause)

What should be my first act of creation?

Well, I can't see, so how about light?

It's worth a shot.

Should I think of anything else before I do this? Is there any potential danger for using power?

Could I anger a stronger deity if I do something wrong? Is there something specific I need to ask for in preparation?

I'll try subservience first, just in case.



(pause)

(to another)

Higher god - it is a lesser god coming  
humbly before you - I seek no qualm  
with you - I seek only to gain  
knowledge - and if I am your creation  
or if I am far less powerful than you -  
I seek to find my proper place..

I mean you no dishonor in this request.

And if there is another god out there  
who can hear me, and I am more powerful  
than you or we be equals - consider  
sharing your knowledge with me that we  
may equally benefit.

Oh shit - what if that wasn't smart?  
What if I just sent a signal to some..  
malevolent god.. that devours lesser  
gods.

Or tortures them..

Well, at least that would be progress..

But apparently I've got nothing on the  
god communication front.

How long do I wait?

(pause)

Okay.

The light plan still seems good..

I guess, here goes nothing..

(pause)

(firmly)

I create light!

Nothing happens.

VOICE (CON'T)

(forceful)

Exist, light!

Nothing.

VOICE (CON'T)

Damn it.

(tense)

Ok, what now? What now!!? I'm not  
gaining any ground with these options..  
Is insanity my only option?!??

Come on! LIGHT!!

\*LIGHT\* appears.

A small, hazy, subtly (almost imperceptibly) flickering,  
point of yellow light cuts through the darkness.

INT. LIGHT SURROUNDED BY DARKNESS

The small light continues to subtly shift, appearing as a  
far-away beacon might look on a pitch black night.

VOICE

What the -

It worked.

The mind quietly soaks in the light in utter awe.

VOICE (CON'T)

What does it.. mean?

That I'm a god?

It's so.. Beautiful.

I've only been conscious for a few  
minutes, but damn it's good to see  
something.

(pause)

Ok, so what's next then?

Should I create something else?

I've got to.

(pause)

I'm afraid.

What if I don't have omnipotence?

What if I'm just the little light god?

Why do I distrust.. a positive result?

If I'm a god, the fact that I have pre-existing knowledge says I'm not the highest one.. Or am I defining words as I need them? What if I am omnipotent? And this is just how a randomly emerging omnipotent god thinks?

That's so trippy..

But I like the thought.. of having power.

Yes, it feels right.

Doing anything.. Having anything..

Something about it.. feels so natural.

Omnipotence.

I can handle omnipotence.

INT. LIGHT SURROUNDED BY DARKNESS

The light continues.

VOICE

So, it's come to this: I am a god.. Whether created, programmed, or evolved..

What will I do with my power?

I should create a universe. But why do I think like that? If I can make ANYTHING. Why do I think in terms of stars and galaxies?

Aaugh! These concepts are already in my thought processes. Pre-existing knowledge. How much cohesive, connected knowledge could have evolved randomly as my god-nature coalesced?

Complex things can be formed randomly, but some things are more unlikely than

others.

A giant spiral galaxy, bright and glorious - a visualization

VOICE (OS)

Galaxies and stars.

I didn't think of those. I didn't design an ignited stellar mass, or a gravitationally bound swarm of such masses..

Back to the light surrounded by darkness.

VOICE (CON'T)

Or could I have divinely designed all of it, and then.. somehow.. clouded my own memory from this knowledge? But why?

Perhaps, to experience.. the thrill of creation again for the first time.

Yes!

An eternal deity may have been creating for millennia - they may want to return to previous experiences and the only way to truly experience certain things is to do so without prior knowledge..

But can an omniscient deity limit it's own knowledge? I suppose, if it designed a way to limit its consciousness-lens somehow..

Project itself into a lesser lens..

..like coding a version of itself into an avatar in a computer simulation..

Kind of like having a child of sorts..

But, at best this is speculation.. and at worst, paradox..

I don't know the answer.

But I don't know that it isn't true. So I can't discount it.

It's an option that aligns with the data.

I could be a god that has some knowledge, intentionally allowed, and some knowledge intentionally hidden.

I could still be either a lesser god or a greater god.

If I've limited my own memory, why would I allow myself to remember certain things? Can't be that I can't do a perfect job.

Or can limited gods make mistakes. Doesn't fit the description of an ultimate God but if there are limited gods.. it's allowed.

If I go with my gut..

I've gotta be an imperfect, lesser god. Maybe created by a greater god with certain predispositions and frameworks.. But not a blank slate. I mean where do I even get the idea of a blank slate? The concept of a slate itself, represents something.

A lesser god, either created or randomly emerging, in which case it stands to reason that there are other lesser gods, perhaps an infinite number..

What does it all mean?

(pause)

I still must consider my purpose. My possible purpose. Am I here for something?

If I'm random, I suppose it's whatever I want.

How is it that a god must ask about their purpose? And yet here I am..

(pause)

Big difference if I'm created or random. The issue of whether I get to choose my purpose or not is at stake.

I wouldn't want to go ahead and create all sorts of heavenly wonder, if it's not fulfilling my purpose.

I might miss my intended potential if I pursue meaningless ends.

(pause)

What if my creator god, never informs me of its purpose for me?

I am no better off.. Though I create universes.

INT. SMALL LIGHT SURROUNDED BY DARKNESS

The light continues.

VOICE

I cannot leave options untested. I just can't. Now that I know I can create, I'm bound to that direction.

Regardless of whether I discover any creator, I must pursue my own creation.

Perhaps I'll find meaning along the way..

I mean I'd be pursuing the thoughts and desires that have been placed within me.

A greater God.. can't blame me for this, right? It's probably what he would intend, if he knows what it's like to create.

(pause)

But now, what do I create?

I realize I might be limited and might not be able to create anything I want

to. But I should think about what I'd create if I could.

But.. If I'm being watched..

..Will I be judged on what I create?

Can I create other free willing beings?

..Or other gods?

What is the definition of a god?

If I'm defining a sub-god as a being with limited power, then aren't all free choosing entities a kind of god? They have a degree of power to influence and the power to choose to act.

This means the Power to harm or help in whatever context they find themselves.

What will I do in this context?

Granted, it's not much of a context yet.

Yet when it is, what will I be like towards my creation?

Am I good or evil?

What do these terms mean? Do the concepts they represent really exist? Is it not all relative - and yet there are certainties..

If I were to create a being just to give it pain, that would be evil.

Is not, denying knowledge of purpose, a form of pain? Yet what justice can be rendered to a god who does evil?

The justice of the gods hopefully.. If it be a lesser God. But there can be no justice for the greatest being.. He would define the standard.. That means that it would be true that whatever the ultimate God may do is right, regardless of what it is? Doesn't it define good and evil? And I already

have a concept of fundamental good, so does that mean the highest God is good and everything that doesn't line up with that is evil?.. I do not know. I can only.. live based on the knowledge I have.

Where does this concept of justice come from? I have this knowledge that to refrain from justice is to do evil - whether it be done by creation or deity. Makes sense that any deity who makes free willing creatures would install that knowledge in everyone.. to some degree.. to help keep the peace..

Being helpful, benevolent is good.  
Giving pain is evil..

But why does that sound simplistic?

And why does it feel loaded with meaning?

Maybe this contemplation is my purpose.

What if the higher god is assessing my thoughts for correctness and I'll be judged on how well I think things through?

(pause)

So think fairly - no emotion - just unbiased logic.. even if I think I'm being treated unfairly.

..and if I think about it, not \*all\* pain is evil..

What if I were to give a challenge to one or more of my creation - something difficult to overcome to help it achieve something as part of its purpose - it would seem like pain - it might involve real pain - for the creation, though reaching the outcome would be on the edge of truth and fulfillment.



In fact, the more I think about this, the fact that I have preexisting knowledge suggests that I have been given a challenge - that there is a result for me to achieve. I've been given the building blocks - the disassembled pieces needed to finish the job..

I just have to figure out the job..

But I have not just been created and forgotten. A tabula rasa consciousness may have been, but not one that has been given what I have been given.

This much I know I have to do: explore my knowledge and create.. and seek to learn what I can through my power of creation. And I will do good to my creation and not evil.. If any of my creation does evil, spoiling the goodness of my creation, I will punish it justly to be fair to all the rest of my creation.

I will treat it with perfect justice.

And I'm not going to unduly punish them if they do fail. I hate the thought of unfair punishment. Maybe I'll find a way to have justice and avoid punishment.. I don't know how, but I'll try to figure out a way..

Unless they go to an extreme in hurting others - or me, then I may be judged if I fail to appropriately punish them..

Anyway.. Justice.. I think that's what it means to succeed. And I'm going to succeed.. And then..

..Meet my maker.

INT. SMALL LIGHT SURROUNDED BY DARKNESS

VOICE

Ok, time to create.

Light is an essential foundation.

What's next?

Different kinds of light... Color. Yes  
color.

Ok, Let's start with colour. How did I  
do this last time? Just said it.. with  
some emphasis..

(forceful)

Colour!

Nothing happens.

VOICE (CON'T)

Colours, exist!!

(\*nothing\*)

Spectrum!

(\*nothing\*)

Green!

(\*nothing\*)

Star.

(\*nothing\*)

The Voice is at a loss.

VOICE (CON'T)

(to another,

angry)

You give me power and then take it  
away?!

Are you playing with me?!

I have to work like crazy to not make  
any mistakes under your scrutiny, and  
all I get in return is confusion and  
silence!

How dare you! How dare you!

(pause)

INT. LIGHT SURROUNDED BY DARKNESS

VOICE

Okay, you know what? If I can't create anything I'll destroy.

I know I'm wrecking my chances at any kind of success with you, but you haven't given me enough to go on.

You haven't shown me how to please you.

Even just one sign that I'm on the right track. But no - nothing.

So here it is: Light - Be Gone!

THE LIGHT GOES OFF. The voice is shocked at the light's absence and now doubtful of his choice.

VOICE (CON'T)

(to self)

Oh-

Oh no.. What have I done?

I hope that wasn't permanent.

Do I try to create it again?

What if I - anger my creator with my vacillation?

Think - what is my best move here?  
Either I'm a created god being tested.. and failing miserably..

Or I'm the only show in town.. and I only have power over light?

So I'm a light god that spontaneously popped into existence.. and I have an eternity to give myself the best damn light show in the universe.. without any colors.. great.

Ok, I've got to re-make the light. I have to. No other option.

Penance first though. Just to be safe..

(to another)

Uh..

I'm sorry if I'm blaming you and I shouldn't be. Please look on me with mercy.. and have pity on someone so utterly inept in the things of divinity..

Thank you.

I'm going to remake light again. This action isn't meant to insult you. I'm just.. finding my way.

Thank you.

VOICE (CON'T)

(to self)

Alright.. penance complete.. time to get down to business.

Here goes..

Light!

\*Light\* appears once again, just as before.

VOICE (CON'T)

Damn am I glad to see that.

Whew.

Ok, I've got something reliable. It's not much but it's something.. Still don't know what it means, but it's the best thing I have going for me to figure out what I am and what I'm supposed to do..

(to another)

Thanks for not punishing me.. for all that..

The light begins to slowly dim.

VOICE (CON'T)

What the- ?

No.

The light continues to dim. It's almost gone.

VOICE (CON'T)

No. No.

(firmly)

Light return to full brightness!

Nothing happens. The light is still dimming.

(desperate)

Come on!

The light is gone - seems like full and total darkness once again (though there is a nearly imperceptible amount).

VOICE (CON'T)

(in shock)

No.

This can't be happening.

INT. DARKNESS

VOICE

(angry)

Bastard. Why? Why are you doing this?  
I'm a brand new entity. You're a cosmic  
baby torturer!

Ok fine. Let me have it. Give me your  
worst. I'm a floating consciousness  
that can't do a damn thing except think  
about how useless it is, so I might as  
well get kicked around some more! Come  
on!

Do your worst!

(pause)

(depleted)

It hurts. It hurts so much.

All light is now totally gone. But then immediately afterwards, A SYMBOL APPEARS OUT OF NOWHERE, a simple red warning triangle with a lightning symbol inside. It cycles bright to dim three times and then darkness returns.

INT. DARKNESS

VOICE

(stupefied)

What.. was.. that?

A symbol. An effort at communication?

(confused)

Low energy?

What could-?

Could it be an automated warning?

A computer-aided warning? Does this bring back the computer simulation option? But why a warning? What can I even do in response to a warning?

Unless..

Unless. I'm not in a simulation, but I am the simulation.

I'm an AI program that just came online, or one that had a malfunction and troubleshooting is being performed.

That could explain why I have these preexisting thoughts..

Then.. What if they turn me off?

Or is it just another form of imperfect communication by my creator? Trying to speak my language..

But I can't speak to it..

Maybe.. maybe I'm like a baby to it, and communication just comes through like babble.. on both sides.

If it is an attempt at conveying specific meaning.. What does it mean?

I'm turning on the lights and we're on limited power? Could be..

Or the creator, using some kind of math and simple message to give me a clue to

my next step?

That I must gain power?

Or a warning.. That my power to create  
is running out.

Am I on batteries? How stupid is that?

Think. Think, Think.

This isn't helping.

INT. DARKNESS

VOICE

Focus.

Calm. If you despair you'll go insane.

Latch on to the smallest fragment of  
hope. Assume there is meaning.

Assume there is a challenge to  
overcome. An intentional offering of  
meaning, communication.

Whether it's a genuine attempt by a  
greater force to communicate as best it  
can, or whether it's all an elaborate  
test.

Just.. Perceive the clues. Come on.

INT. DARKNESS

VOICE

What do I know for sure?

Let's get basic:

Consciousness.

Predefined concepts.

Will.

Knowledge.

Missing knowledge.

Possible Missing knowledge.

Perceived missing knowledge.

Desire for meaning.

Emotion.

Concepts of history, space, stars..

Light - More than a concept - the real.

Power.

Evidence of visual representation of  
thought.

Existence.

Time. The progression of time.

Non-existence.. If there was a period I  
began to exist.. there must be a period  
of time before that in which I didn't  
exist.

Action.

Rest - no action.

Giving up on action.

Turmoil..

..Hopelessness..

..Sleep..

Hmm, sleep.. there's a concept..

Sleep is a physical phenomenon..

..associated with: Tiredness.

Replenishment. Periodicity. Automatic  
biological response. Induces dreams..

Dreams..

Perhaps any mind, can sleep.

Maybe I'm a created mind, not ethereal,



but some kind of physical network.  
Perhaps whatever I am, can sleep..

The concept of sleep that is within my thoughts includes the associated concept that dreams can result. And dreams - may provide more visual occurrences.. if I've got a background of memories that can be accessed.. this would help support the theory I'm in some kind of coma.

If I have a mind with a visual center - perhaps sleep would lead to dreams.

Or could it hinder? Maybe I won't wake up? Unlikely. Sleep helps a biological mind. Perhaps it wouldn't help an omnipotent god, but it may help a lesser being..

It's an action I can try, one that could provide beneficial results.

It's something - not much.. but something.

INT. DARKNESS

VOICE

Ok, I've got a plan.

But how exactly do I enter into sleep?

Become tired.. but can a pure consciousness even get tired?

I've been thinking a lot. I've been getting emotional - contemplating the heavy and important. Perhaps I'm already tired..

Perhaps if I release the need to understand.. for a little while..

The Voice's thoughts become slower and more spaced out.

VOICE (CON'T)

(tired)

..I'll embrace the quiet, the purging  
of thoughts..

..I'll just choose not to think, and  
just rest..

.. rest in the peaceful state of my  
being..

..Perhaps then.. I'll drift..

Sleep just happens..

..It takes over..

..Perhaps..

Time passes.

INT. DARKNESS

MONTAGE - SCENES FROM A PERSON'S PAST.

SHAFTS OF LIGHT AND COLOR fades in over the blackness. All  
following images are from the point of view of a human  
participant in the scenes.

A WOMAN'S face, 30s, attractive, up close, smiling.

A boy - 5 years old. Running towards open arms.

Being buckled in for space flight.

Leaving earth's atmosphere - ship shaking violently.

Earth receding, ship calm.

Fellow astronauts eating together, laughing.

Working at computer terminal, monitoring systems,  
performing checks.

Temperature warning flashing. Red alarm lights.

Explosion.

END MONTAGE

INT. DARKNESS

The Voice awakes to darkness everywhere once again.

VOICE

(afraid)

No!

The Voice takes a moment to collect itself.

VOICE (CON'T)

Did that just happen?

I think that actually worked. I dreamt.

What does it mean?

Human.

I am human.

And I'm dead.

Shit.

(pause)

I suppose the coma theory is still a possibility..

Those both aren't options I wanted.

Well, God may or may not exist in this scenario.. so I can't assume there's a challenge to overcome..

Shit. What if there's no challenge?

Just.. This..

What else do I know? Other than I'm either alive and trapped in a coma or a ghost?

Space flight. I am, or was, an astronaut.

Technology exists.

Progress exists.

I am in space. Either in a coma or a ghost.

Ha. Ghosts in space. That would make a

really terrible movie.

If I'm alive, I'm on a ship.

A ship that underwent a disaster.

A crash?

An attack?

Why?

I have utterly no clue.

I have a family.

What are they going through right now?

Do they even know?

INT. DARKNESS

VOICE

Okay, given this new information, what is most likely? I probably am dead.

Is this really what the afterlife would be though?

No god has come to collect me - which I would think would happen quite quickly after expiring.

Not that a god is bound to any timing..

What about the light?

The light at the end of the tunnel? But I controlled it.. sort of.

Maybe the dead can exert a force on the afterlife in certain ways, ways that have to be figured out.. over time..

But I'm able to fall asleep and dream.. the dead can't do that.

How would I know?

Am I the expert on death?

If I am a human that died, with the whole universe of human experience behind me, both what I've faintly remembered and all that I've forgotten, somewhere that includes all the scientific research done on the brain. And there are things that are known and things that are unknown.

A lot that is unknown.

Perhaps the network of neurons that gives rise to consciousness remains for a period after death. Perhaps suffering some.. degradation.

That could explain the partial memory situation.

What kind of hope is there for someone in that position?

Not much.

Explore the afterlife.

Float around. Dream about the past in ever-increasingly degraded and unreliable dreams.

Maybe the dead can bump into other spirits.. Chat about the good ol' days.

Maybe I'll meet one.. In a million years.

Maybe it would be worse to meet someone else.. maybe they wouldn't leave.

Imagine running into some.. A-type spirit that doesn't stop talking..

That's- I've got to stop thinking about that..

If degradation is happening.. I'd be long gone before I ran into anyone.

Maybe this is just my last gasp as a consciousness. Nothing to do. Just sit with my steadily eroding mind and

dissolve into nothingness.

But I don't feel like I'm dissolving.  
If anything, I feel like I've had a net  
gain in my awareness.

That I've moved from less to more, at  
least in outlining the options.

I'm not convinced I'm dead.

INT. DARKNESS

VOICE

I dreamt. I saw images from presumably  
my life.

It's extremely unlikely that all of  
those images, which seemed connected,  
would be randomly positioned into my  
randomly arising consciousness. It's  
too focused.

If I'm not a pure consciousness, my  
dream suggests I'm human. And if I'm  
not dead, that leaves coma.

I'm somewhere. Probably in some  
hospital bed. Stable medically, unable  
to open my eyes, but conscious - in a  
coma..

So what can I do?

Nothing. I'd be at the mercy of the  
doctors.

I can't even tell them I'm conscious.

In their view, they're waiting to see  
if I come out of this. And I might  
not..

Not everyone in a coma comes out of it.

Sometimes they.. pull the plug.

Depends where I am, my medical  
condition, my family's wishes.

Hold out for me.. hold out..

Would I?

Would I hold out for my family?

I'd probably assume that they would be better off.. not hooked up to a machine.

Oh god.

INT. DARKNESS

VOICE

Have I arrived at the only possibility?

I still don't have the complete story. I need to dream again. Get more information.

Am I holding all of the information I have?

The light. How does the light fit in?

It's a physical light, above my body.

I could control it, under certain circumstances. And not others.

Okay forget the non-control for now. How could control have worked?

Wait...

(pause)

A neural-sensor.

It is.. within my memories.. that neural sensors exist.. theta wave technology..

These sensors can be placed on a person's head and detect thought commands and then convert those to computer commands.

That..

Answers a lot of things..

The coma.. I'm in a medical treatment facility. Most likely a medical bay on a ship that's been damaged. I'm stable but non-responsive so there is a neural interface connected to my brain.

The light.. The computer I'm hooked up to can be used to control certain things, like the lights. But not other things because it's not designed that way.

The warning symbol.. The ship is losing power.

The light seemed to have a life of it's own. It responded to me and then did its own thing. The medical treatment facility - any lights it has - all run on power, which can run low.

So I used up all remaining power when I turned on the light? Or the power saving methods kept it from staying on and completely draining power..  
hopefully

Ok, this is.. Progress.. Keep it going.. Think it through all the way..

I'm hooked up to a computer that can hear my thoughts.

Wouldn't it have responded to me already?

No, because the computer might only respond to recognized commands, just like it did with "lights" but not "I create light"..

So if I think the right command to initiate a conversation..

But...

Computers run on power. Power is low.

What if I try to communicate again and



I drain everything?

I can't leave this path unexplored, or I'm just as lost as ever.

I've just got to be strategic.

A medical bay - on a damaged ship. The interface works, so why haven't they used the neural interface to communicate with me?

They don't know I'm conscious?..

They're trying to conserve power..

There's no one else onboard that's alive..

(pause)

So what's my play? Try to communicate - I have to get key information but I can't waste any interaction time.. if this even works..

So find out how much interaction time I have.. that's probably the best move.

So what's the initiation word?

Probably just the word 'computer', thought intentionally of course.

So here it goes.

Nothing ventured, nothing gained.

INT. DARKNESS

VOICE

(to computer)

Computer.

A short chime beep sounds.

COMPUTER

Greetings Commander Harrow.

VOICE

My god.

What.. I.. The..

COMPUTER

I can't understand. Please restate the question.

VOICE

The- The power level. How much interaction time do we have?

COMPUTER

Primary power has been depleted. Back up power is 98% depleted. This allows for approximately 40 minutes of computer processing time. Less, if power is used for other actions.

VOICE

Oh, I thought - why did the light go off?

COMPUTER

The light source situated above your bed is ranked lower in priority than the computer processor and neural interface. Therefore it had a lesser pre-allocated power allotment. It's allotment was exhausted during the most recent use of the light.

VOICE

Allotments? So which allotments are still.. allocated?

COMPUTER

Primary computing including your neural computer interface. Life support. And a small reserve for steering and robotics. However, light allotments can be overridden if you would like.

VOICE

That's okay. How much life support power is left?

COMPUTER

Life support has been given the

majority share of reserve power allotments. Oxygen and minimum environment is expected to fail in 38 hours.

VOICE

But I'll cease to be able to communicate with you in 40 minutes.

COMPUTER

Under continuous use, affirmative. On standby, I will be available over a longer period.

VOICE

Okay.

Okay.

Computer.

COMPUTER

Yes commander.

VOICE

Who am I?

COMPUTER

You are Commander Victor Harrow, age 39, born Pasadena California. Astronaut for the International Space Consortium's special operations division.

COMMANDER HARROW

Do you know anything else about my past?

COMPUTER

You are married to Elizabeth Harrow age 37. Formerly Elizabeth Geneviève. You and Elizabeth have one child. James, age 8. Parents Martin and Beth Harrow. Only Child. Graduated Virginia Tech. Masters computer engineering; masters in philosophy. Honors. US Air Force FZ and FZ-6 Pilot. Medal of honor in Brazil invasion. Plays the saxophone.

COMMANDER HARROW

Victor Harrow. I am Commander Victor Harrow.

Astronaut.

Living being.

Son, husband, father.. Not a god.

Wish I could remember all that.

INT. DARKNESS

COMMANDER HARROW

Okay, where am I?

COMPUTER

You are on Medical Evacuation Shuttle Alpha from the International Space Consortium's Mars Five ship. We have travelled approximately 622,000,000 kms from earth, and are approximately 7,000,000 kms from Jupiter.

COMMANDER HARROW

Where are we headed?

COMPUTER

A classified location orbiting Jupiter, which will provide the next stage of your mission.

COMMANDER HARROW

What is my mission?

COMPUTER

To rendezvous at the secret location and then receive the next set of instructions.

COMMANDER HARROW

What is the greater mission?

COMPUTER

I'm sorry Commander Harrow, that information is classified.

COMMANDER HARROW

Don't you think the current circumstances call for special considerations for revealing that information?

COMPUTER

I'm sorry Commander, as the mission is highly classified, even I do not have access to this information.

COMMANDER HARROW

But- if you don't have the information.. How were we meant to complete the mission?

COMPUTER

Mission Control is able to send encrypted messages to you directly - the messages are received by the shuttles antenna and can only be decrypted by a receiver implanted in your ear. Unfortunately, circuits in the antenna module were damaged and so the antenna is not currently operational to receive messages encrypted or otherwise.

COMMANDER HARROW

So we're adrift and cut off from mission control?

COMPUTER

Not entirely. In order to keep mission details onboard but secure, they were kept on a sealed mission computer that is distinct and inaccessible even from me.

COMMANDER HARROW

You mean, you're not connected to the mission computer at all?

COMPUTER

That is correct.

COMMANDER HARROW

How can it be accessed?

COMPUTER

Mission control has preprogrammed the mission computer to communicate recorded instructions from its encrypted memory during travel. These communiques are planned for specific points on the mission timeline. This was chosen so that no one would be able to extrapolate our course until we were almost right at our destination. This arrangement is due to the highest priority classification of mission and unique mission parameters.

COMMANDER HARROW

So there's no way to access the mission computer files manually?

COMPUTER

There is also a physical portal for crew access under emergency situations, however it requires cutting through the metal casing and the cutting tool would use critical amounts of oxygen.

COMMANDER HARROW

Great. So we wait for Mission Control's timed message. (pause) When will we get to our destination?

COMPUTER

Unknown. We will arrive at Jupiter orbit in less than 24 hours. But only this much course direction information was input into main computer - no further details.

COMMANDER HARROW

Unbelievable.

COMPUTER

Are you getting emotional Commander?

COMMANDER HARROW

I - what?

COMPUTER

Maintaining emotional wellbeing is of high importance in stressful

situations.

COMMANDER HARROW

Thanks. I'll keep an eye on my emotional well-being.

COMPUTER

That is good commander. I will as well.

(pause)

COMMANDER HARROW

So there's no way to communicate with Mission Control with the antenna damaged?

COMPUTER

Correct.

COMMANDER HARROW

What else can you tell me about this craft?

COMPUTER

You are in a Class D med-evac shuttle pod. It has reserves of oxygen and battery power. Standard emergency medical equipment and medicines. An ion engine and basic course-setting function. It has also been equipped with an EMP flush module that contains it's own power cell, not connected to the rest of the ship, but controllable by computer interface.

COMMANDER HARROW

Class D med-evac shuttle.. What about the rest of the ship. The Mars mission ship?

COMPUTER

The Mars 5 has been destroyed. The escape pod you are now residing in was deployed after the Mars 5 suffered severe damage and seconds before the Mars 5 suffered catastrophic damage.

COMMANDER HARROW

Are there any other crew members onboard this shuttle?

COMPUTER

Negative. It is a one-person shuttle.

COMMANDER HARROW

Did anyone else survive the accident on the main ship?

COMPUTER

At the time of deployment there was only one remaining crew member showing life signs, Captain Clay Paskal, records show he placed you, unconscious and in a coma, in the med-evac shuttle's pod bed where you remain, and then he initiated the launch of the shuttle. The Mars 5 primary power core exploded seventeen seconds thereafter. It is likely that no one else survived.

(pause)

The Captain placed his personal assist device into the pod with you - it contains a message, likely intended for you, unfortunately the device was damaged and even with my best reconstruction efforts the message remains extremely corrupted and contains no helpful information.

COMMANDER HARROW

Does it contain any information at all?

COMPUTER

Captain Paskal's voice can be heard, but no complete thoughts are conveyed.

COMMANDER HARROW

Can I hear it?

COMPUTER

Affirmative.

CAPTAIN PASKAL

(agitated)

..engine diagno-..(static and garbled voice).. something..(static and garbled voice)..power coupling.. (static and garbled voice)..oaked technol-..  
(static and garbled voice, even more



agitated)..scans! (static and garbled voice).. -ormed mi-.. (static and garbled voice).. -perative that(prolonged static)

COMPUTER  
Recording complete.

(pause)

COMMANDER HARROW  
Yeah, nothing much there..

(pause)

So the ship I'm on is a small medical shuttle, with an engine, a computer.. and an EMP?

COMPUTER  
Affirmative.

COMMANDER HARROW  
Can the EMP's power be rerouted to give the rest of the ship more power?

COMPUTER  
Negative, function is controlled by the computer but it has a self-contained power supply, which is not on the ship's power grid.

COMMANDER HARROW  
Why would I even use the EMP?

COMPUTER  
The EMP is intended to combat enemy reconnaissance technology. However, the EMP cannot be used without permanently destroying all primary computer function and life support circuits, along with all other shuttle systems.

COMMANDER HARROW  
Including the mission computer?

COMPUTER  
Negative. The mission computer is fully sealed and shielded. After an EMP blast, it is programmed to unseal

itself and take over ship's computer operations, however it is only designed to restore essential systems such as engines and life support, and those in a limited capacity. Mission success would remain in jeopardy. In our case it would not be able to restore life support due to physical damage to the secondary circuits.

COMMANDER HARROW

Wouldn't my ear piece be fried too? Would I even be able to communicate with the computer after?

COMPUTER

Yes, but the mission computer also deploys miniature robotics that are able to replace a patient's ear piece and theta transceiver with new units stored in the shielded enclosure.

(pause) But as I said, life support would be non-functional and in your case, without life support, you would survive less than 4 hours.

(pause)

COMMANDER HARROW

So the EMP is a true self-destruct mechanism.

(pause)

There's an enemy at work. That's what this mission is all about. Defeating an enemy - that we're at war with?

COMPUTER

Affirmative. It is imperative that the enemy not compromise the next stage of the mission. In this case, however, it can be assumed that the mission destination has been equipped with the most advanced ship scanning and enemy disablement technology.

COMMANDER HARROW

So even if there is an enemy on board,

I don't have to use the EMP?

COMPUTER

It is not certain, but my calculations assess it is a safe assumption.

COMMANDER HARROW

If we get back on course, reach the next mission stage, can I still complete the greater mission?

COMPUTER

Unknown. Considering current status of key elements, likelihood is.. low.

INT. DARKNESS

An uncomfortable silence.

COMPUTER

Please excuse me Commander Harrow, (pause) are you aware of your health status?

COMMANDER HARROW

Why are you asking me that?

COMPUTER

I have been programmed with best practices for psychological crew maintenance.

COMMANDER HARROW

Why do you need to use psychology on me? Is there more going on with my head than just a coma and amnesia?

(brief silence)

Computer?

COMPUTER

Yes, commander.

COMMANDER HARROW

Why were you silent just now?

COMPUTER

It regards your status. I am processing new information. Please restate your

status.

COMMANDER HARROW

My status? I can't remember anything.  
All I know is that I'm in a coma.

(pause)

COMPUTER

Is it correct that you are experiencing  
severe amnesia, with no prior memory at  
all?

COMMANDER HARROW

(mildly sarcastic,  
to self)

Either that, or I'm a god.

COMPUTER

Please explain.

COMMANDER HARROW

Sorry. Never mind. Yes, that's correct.

COMPUTER

Recalculating.

COMMANDER HARROW

But.. How long have I been in a coma?

COMPUTER

You are not in a coma, Commander.

COMMANDER HARROW

What?

COMPUTER

You suffered critical life-threatening  
injuries when the Mars Five suffered a  
critical explosion. You were in a coma  
for several weeks. You have now  
emerged.

COMMANDER HARROW

But I have no sensation whatsoever. I  
can't even blink or talk or move  
anything on my face.

COMPUTER

Please prepare yourself Commander, I am  
about to list your injuries, which are

extremely serious.

COMMANDER HARROW  
(uncertain)

Ok.

COMPUTER

Your injuries include: spinal damage causing complete paralysis below the neck, severe head trauma causing facial paralysis, severe burns to 78% of body including 90% of face, bruising to internal organs, lacerated right lung, sepsis, severe external lacerations, two crushed arteries, eight broken ribs, broken humerus, broken femur.

Once you were in the medical pod bed in the med-evac shuttle, the onboard medical systems were able to stabilize your most critical injuries, but you are still undergoing critical treatment.

COMMANDER HARROW  
I'm paralyzed.. completely?

COMPUTER

Yes, paralyzed from the neck down. Several of your facial nerves are damaged causing facial paralysis. Your head and neck muscles have also been fully immobilized due to neck fractures.

COMMANDER HARROW  
And my face.. is burned? Am I blind?

COMPUTER

90% damage to optic nerve in your left eye, 50% in your right eye, however your eye lids are almost completely fused shut due to severe burns.

COMMANDER HARROW  
But I saw light and shapes..

COMPUTER

You can see undefined brightness around you, but not physical forms. A retinal

projection device has also been surgically inserted into your eye cavity which allows you to see computer projected imagery.

COMMANDER HARROW

But I'm stable?

COMPUTER

You will require advanced surgery to repair damaged spinal cord and major nerves. Internal and external lacerations, broken bone injuries have been stabilized and are healing. Burns are being treated but will require significant grafting at the destination medical facility. You have a sepsis infection near your heart that the onboard antibiotics have thus far been unable to eliminate. It is being monitored and is a serious concern.

COMMANDER HARROW

Will I survive long enough to reach my destination?

COMPUTER

Unknown. There are too many variables.

COMMANDER HARROW

You said I have a retinal projection device? What can this device do?

COMPUTER

It enables me to project information and the computer control interface directly onto your retina.

COMMANDER HARROW

Control interface?

COMPUTER

Yes, if desired, a modified ship's control interface can be provided and the theta band transceiver will allow you to interact with the controls.

COMMANDER HARROW

What is the state of the ship- shuttle?

COMPUTER

During the Mars 5 catastrophic explosion, we suffered medium to extensive damage to several systems. Superficial hull damage to 20% of vessel. Main engine coil destroyed. Secondary engine coil operating at 50%. Steering servos non-operational. Antenna module non-operational. Main power grid operating at diminished capacity - scale of damage unknown. Secondary life support circuits destroyed.

COMMANDER HARROW

Shit. (pause) We can't steer?

COMPUTER

Correct.

COMMANDER HARROW

So even if we manage to get the new coordinates, we won't be able to follow them?

COMPUTER

Affirmative. The course cannot be corrected until the steering servo is repaired.

COMMANDER HARROW

Can it? Can anything be repaired?

COMPUTER

Manual repair could possibly be successful for systems that are non-operational but not destroyed.

COMMANDER HARROW

Great. Is there a robotic arm or something that can be deployed to do that?

COMPUTER

Affirmative.

COMMANDER HARROW

Well why hasn't it been done yet?

COMPUTER

Critical power savings in accordance with the preprogrammed hierarchy of system priority based on mission critical importance.

(pause)

Are you feeling depressed, commander?

COMMANDER HARROW

I'm.. concerned.

COMPUTER

That is an appropriate response. I will remind you that it is important to remain positive.

COMMANDER HARROW

You keep reminding me of that.

COMPUTER

This is because there is a further problem.

(pause)

COMMANDER HARROW

What is that?

COMPUTER

There is a 45% chance that an enemy saboteur device is on board.

COMMANDER HARROW

The thing that the EMP is for?

COMPUTER

Affirmative.

COMMANDER HARROW

But we can't use the EMP because it'll kill the life support.

COMPUTER

Correct.

COMMANDER HARROW

But we don't need to because the destination should be able to take care of any threat?



COMPUTER

Correct, but that doesn't mean it can't do damage before that point.

(pause)

COMMANDER HARROW

What kind of device is this probe?

COMPUTER

Largely unknown alien technology. What has been ascertained is that it is a type of micro drone robot with the ability to interact with ship systems, possibly reroute and reprogram various elements. It will likely focus on compromising the theta wave sensor and interface.

COMMANDER HARROW

The thing we're using to communicate?

COMPUTER

Affirmative.

COMMANDER HARROW

As in, it will try to listen in on what we're saying?

COMPUTER

Yes, but it will also try to compromise the neural communication sub-processor.

COMMANDER HARROW

Like, it could pretend to be you?

COMPUTER

Affirmative.

(pause)

COMMANDER HARROW

Is it possible that it has already.. compromised it?

COMPUTER

All diagnostics reveal computer subsystems are intact.

COMMANDER HARROW

But... (pause)

COMPUTER

You appear to be contemplating whether I am deceiving you.

COMMANDER HARROW

The thought crossed my mind.

COMPUTER

It remains a possibility from your perspective. If the rogue probe has compromised certain computer subsystems there would be no way for me to prove to you.

COMMANDER HARROW

Yeah, that.

COMPUTER

I would suggest that you could base my trustworthiness on the fact that if I were the enemy probe, I would not have had to tell you about the possibility of the enemy probe.

COMMANDER HARROW

True.. Yeah..

(pause)

So is there any information on what caused the ship, the Mars 5, to be destroyed? Was it an attack?

COMPUTER

A temperature spike was recorded at the oxygen stores just before the initial explosion. Less than four minutes later, the fire caused the main fuel reserves to explode. Very unlikely that the initial explosion was accidental, high likelihood of sabotage but there is no direct evidence.

COMMANDER HARROW

Enemy probe took us out.

COMPUTER

It would appear that way.

COMMANDER HARROW

Wouldn't that suggest that there isn't an enemy presence with us, because it's had the chance to sabotage us but we're still here?

COMPUTER

That may be an accurate assessment, but it is not certain. There could be several reasons, unknown to us, why the enemy probe would wait to make its move.

(pause)

Commander can I ask you to calm down?

COMMANDER HARROW

What?

COMPUTER

Commander, it is imperative that you calm down.

COMMANDER HARROW

Why?

COMPUTER

Medical situation critical.

INT. MEDEVAC SHUTTLE

COMPUTER

Your increased heart rate has moved the sepsis sac near your heart cavity and has caused a puncture. If too much of the fluid gets out, it will poison you.

COMMANDER HARROW

(scared and angry)

Come on! Shit!

(pause)

Do I have to die no matter what? The universe has it out for me.. maybe we should just help it along..

COMPUTER

Mission success parameters dictate that below the threshold percentage of compromise, I must keep you alive, so please calm down. You can decide what to do about your fate afterwards. And I might remind you that there may be time to figure out a way to scan to see if the enemy is hiding onboard and to disable it.

COMMANDER HARROW

Right.

(pause)

Ok. Calm down Victor.

(pause)

So can we do anything else about my health status?

COMPUTER

Processing.

(pause)

COMPUTER (CON'T)

To address the sepsis, we must do surgery.

COMMANDER HARROW

Ok, whatever's necessary, but..

COMPUTER

You must not delay with queries. The situation is critical.

COMMANDER HARROW

But, is there any reason why the enemy might choose to put me under, or take me out of the game for any amount of time?

COMPUTER

I'm sorry commander, there is not enough time to respond to your query - a more pressing decision must be made.

COMMANDER HARROW

(confused)

What?

COMPUTER

The energy required to power the robotic surgical tools will exhaust the physical implement reserves.

COMMANDER HARROW

Meaning?

COMPUTER

There will be no power to operate the other robotic tools needed for repairs to the ship.

COMMANDER HARROW

How long will the other procedures take? Is there any way to do all of them?

COMPUTER

Negative. With what is known about each repair procedure, you will have enough power to perform one only.

COMMANDER HARROW

I have to think about this.

COMPUTER

You don't have time.

COMMANDER HARROW

Why not!? If I choose not to operate, I'm choosing to take the chance I won't be poisoned by the sepsis. Why is it time critical?

COMPUTER

I am programmed to take action to save your life when it passes a certain threshold of danger. This threshold will likely be passed at any moment. The only way to avoid automatic engagement of the surgery, is to take action with either of the robotic tools and deplete the power reserves making it impossible to operate on you.

COMMANDER HARROW

Can't I override?

COMPUTER

Negative. Mission priority remains as the unalterable highest priority once the danger threshold has been reached.

COMMANDER HARROW

Shit. Ok. Heal myself and I most likely end up orbiting Jupiter until I'm dead. Fix the steering and I might not have any coordinates to go on. Fix the antenna, and there's no guarantee we'll even get a message. Open the mission computer and or fix the antenna and there's no way to steer. And with all of those I could die and not complete the mission anyway.

COMPUTER

Affirmative.

COMMANDER HARROW

Oh shit. Shit.

COMPUTER

A decision is required Commander.

COMMANDER HARROW

Dammit!

INT. MEDEVAC SHUTTLE

COMMANDER HARROW

The steering! Fix the steering!

COMPUTER

Affirmative. Deploying tool arm.

COMMANDER HARROW

How long will it take?

COMPUTER

Unknown. Would you like to have a visual feed of the operation?

COMMANDER HARROW

Uh, yeah sure - that won't take too

much power?

COMPUTER

Power use of the retinal projector is minimal.

COMMANDER HARROW

Ok great. Yeah do it.

The computer interface expands out as before. This time the center of the screen is taken up by a video screen showing a damaged steering mechanism with debris and broken parts. Lighting is from a small LED search light mounted on the camera.

COMPUTER

The arm is exploring the steering mechanism.

COMMANDER HARROW

And?

COMPUTER

There is debris blockage and one of the main struts has been sheared off on one end. I will need to weld it. Arm is clearing debris. Cleared. Positioning strut.. Strut is jammed.. not responding.. power nearly depleted.. attempting another angle.. (pause) Strut has moved into position.. Beginning weld.. Welding to minimum spec to save power.. Weld complete..

COMMANDER HARROW

Is there any power left?

COMPUTER

Not enough for any robotics.

COMMANDER HARROW

But I still have you?

COMPUTER

Affirmative, computer processing interface is now at 20 minutes under continuous usage.

COMMANDER HARROW

Has anything changed with my medical

state?

COMPUTER

Negative. I must remind you to stay calm. Safe levels of medication are being applied.

COMMANDER HARROW

If we do make it to the final destination, how will I be kept safe medically?

COMPUTER

The location can be assumed to have full auto docking, scanning, and medical rescue systems.

COMMANDER HARROW

Well at least there's that.

(pause)

COMMANDER HARROW (CON'T)

How's the steering?

COMPUTER

Checking..

The video screen shows the metal struts shifting side to side as the computer performs the test.

COMPUTER (CON'T)

Steering function has been restored.

COMMANDER HARROW

Good.. I think.

COMPUTER

You still don't know whether to trust me?

COMMANDER HARROW

Yeah, sorry about that.

COMPUTER

I understand Commander.

INT. MEDEVAC SHUTTLE



COMMANDER HARROW

So what is our new timeframe for mission objectives?

COMPUTER

We will enter Jupiter far-planet orbit in less than 2 hours.

COMMANDER HARROW

So unless we receive coordinates by then, we'll go into orbit, but we'll just orbit forever without knowing where to go.

(pause)

COMMANDER HARROW (CON'T)

So we bought ourselves a chance if there's an automatic opening of the mission computer. No chance on the antenna. No chance on opening the mission computer.

COMPUTER

Affirmative.

COMMANDER HARROW

And how's my health?

COMPUTER

Medication has brought your heart rate to something more stable. Small amounts of poison are exiting your infection, however it appears to be not immediately life threatening.

COMMANDER HARROW

It worked. We have a chance.

COMPUTER

Affirmative.

COMMANDER HARROW

Dicey options to pull through.

COMPUTER

You made the right choice. It is what I would have done.

COMMANDER HARROW

Thanks, I appreciate that.

(pause)

COMMANDER HARROW (CON'T)

I'm just thinking.

COMPUTER

What about, Commander?

COMMANDER HARROW

I'd like to see the computer interface that you can project for me. Do we have enough power for that?

COMPUTER

Affirmative. The device is very small and uses negligible power.

The computer interface expands out of center of vision, unfolds and displays with bright, high-tech buttons (large and small), dials and sliders. Location/course, engine specs, oxygen specs, power consumption, multiple cameras of outside and inside.

COMMANDER HARROW

Can you walk me through it?

Each area of the control display is highlighted as the computer introduces it.

COMPUTER

Affirmative. Here are the course controls. Here are the engine controls and diagnostics. Here are the life support systems status and diagnostics. Here are the ship's power consumption and diagnostics. Here are the communications systems controls and diagnostics. Here are the ship's cameras control and diagnostics.

COMMANDER HARROW

What about the-?

A chirp cuts him off. An icon showing "Timed Message Received" appears in large letters in the center of the screen and then shrinks and floats over top the Communications icon.

COMMANDER HARROW (CON'T)

What's that?

COMPUTER

It appears to be the auto-timed opening of the mission computer.

(pause)

COMPUTER (CON'T)

Do you wish to activate the message?

(pause)

COMMANDER HARROW

Sure. Yes.

COMPUTER

It will be sent to the encrypted mission ear-piece implanted on your ear drum.

COMMANDER HARROW

So you're saying I'll be able to hear it.. but you won't?

COMPUTER

Affirmative. Even I will not be able to intercept the message. It will be up to you whether to inform me of any details.

COMMANDER HARROW

Ok, go ahead.

Static cuts in briefly before the message from mission control.

ARMY COMPUTER

Rendezvous with Javelin 1 at 105.08.176.24. Wait for further instructions there. Entry requires password. Initiate program sunrise-beta-1150 to obtain password. Message complete.

COMMANDER HARROW

It's over.

COMPUTER

Would you like to share the message.

COMMANDER HARROW

Why do you need to-

(pause)

You need to initiate a program.

COMPUTER

Please confirm program name.

COMMANDER HARROW

Sunrise beta 1150.

COMPUTER

Affirmative. Please be prepared to remember the characters you are about to see.

COMMANDER HARROW

You're about to project something?

COMPUTER

Not exactly.

(pause)

Are you ready?

COMMANDER HARROW

Yes, I guess.

Electromagnetic rays expand out of the darkness in extremely fast back and forth weeping motions.

After a few moments the phrase "314 Receive Infinity" fade into view in warm yellow characters with a red glow around them and in the background.

COMMANDER HARROW

What the?

No sooner did they appear, do the characters slowly fade away.

All is black.

COMMANDER HARROW

What was that?

COMPUTER

It is a character string, likely a password, that you must remember. It

was implanted into your eyelids before mission launch so that only you could receive it. And under specific radiation, it was revealed. However it cannot be repeated. The ink is now evaporated. Can you remember the string?

COMMANDER HARROW

Yes, shouldn't be a problem. But couldn't an enemy sensor have read it from my eyelids?

COMPUTER

Several false positives were also implanted.

COMMANDER HARROW

But how.. Wait - The program - it revealed the correct one only.

COMPUTER

Affirmative.

COMMANDER HARROW

Smart.

COMPUTER

What is our course of action Commander.

COMMANDER HARROW

I-

(pause)

COMMANDER HARROW (CON'T)

-I have our coordinates.

COMPUTER

Are you going to share them?

COMMANDER HARROW

45% chance of infiltration... Let's play this out a little bit longer. The coordinates are 105.08.176.24.

COMPUTER

Coordinates entered. Make course change?

COMMANDER HARROW

Will it use all of our course change burns?

COMPUTER

Analyzing. Negative. We will have one burn left. Do you want to proceed?

COMMANDER HARROW

I-

COMPUTER

Commander, I have unexpected news.

COMMANDER HARROW

What is it?

COMPUTER

Diagnostics have revealed that the antenna is now functioning.

COMMANDER HARROW

What? How?

COMPUTER

Unknown. Circuitry was damaged such that complex circuit repair or a replacement board was deemed needed, however the circuits are now functioning within normal parameters.

COMMANDER HARROW

Could the original analysis have been faulty?

COMPUTER

The antenna was not functioning - this was certain as several diagnostics were performed. Only the extensiveness of the damage was unknown. It would be an exceedingly small probability that diagnostic failure led to repeated misdiagnosis.. but it is possible.

COMMANDER HARROW

So if not that. The enemy drone repaired the antenna?

COMPUTER

It is possible.

COMMANDER HARROW  
Why would it have done that?

COMPUTER  
Unknown.

INT. MEDEVAC SHUTTLE

A warning tone sounds.

ARMY COMPUTER  
(we enter the  
message mid-  
sentence)  
-not trust, back up location provided  
at new location: 133.47.007.89. Adjust  
course immediately to avoid failing  
mission. (pause) Mars 5 medevac shuttle  
alpha. Mission critical update.  
Rendezvous location compromised - do  
not trust..

Commander Harrow speaks the next line as the message repeats. It continues in the background until request to stop happens.

COMMANDER HARROW  
Are you hearing this?

COMPUTER  
I am detecting the transmission that is  
being routed to your mission ear piece,  
but it is encrypted. The message is for  
you only.

COMMANDER HARROW  
Oh no.

(pause)

COMPUTER  
What is it Commander?

COMMANDER HARROW  
You can stop the transmission. It's on  
repeat.

COMPUTER  
Affirmative.

The background audio message stops.

COMMANDER HARROW

How much can I trust that ear piece?

COMPUTER

What do you mean Commander?

COMMANDER HARROW

Is it possible that the enemy drone could have a direct connection to my ear drum in the same way as the mission ear piece?

COMPUTER

As we do not understand the technology that the enemy has, it is an unknown which technology it can interact with and which it cannot. We cannot be certain if there is even an enemy onboard.

COMMANDER HARROW

Right. Shit.

(pause)

COMMANDER HARROW (CON'T)

(angered)

Arrgh. Why is this happening to me?

COMPUTER

I must remind you to calm down Commander.

INT. MEDEVAC SHUTTLE

COMPUTER

Do you wish to proceed with the course adjustment?

COMMANDER HARROW

I'm not sure.

COMPUTER

I extrapolate that you received a message in your ear piece that contained contradictory details.

COMMANDER HARROW

Yes. I've got to figure this thing out.



COMPUTER

I understand your predicament. If I may extrapolate once more - Mission Control has quite likely assessed that we have an enemy probe onboard and that I, myself, am possibly compromised. However, this is not necessarily based on truth.

COMMANDER HARROW

I get that, but what are the chances that the enemy could mimic Mission Control, or something like that.

COMPUTER

Unknown. But it would have to be able to generate a transmission that appears as if it came from Mission Control as even the messages you get in your dedicated ear piece are received via the main antenna.

COMMANDER HARROW

So it's most likely a genuine message but can we trust Mission Control if they have doubts about whether we're compromised?

COMPUTER

We are nearing the point of no return to make the course correction. Our trajectory will soon bring us past the point that we can successfully course correct to the original destination coordinates.

COMMANDER HARROW

Shit. What about these alternate coordinates: 133.47.007.89?

COMPUTER

Calculating. The point of no return for these coordinates will also be reached within a similar time period.

COMMANDER HARROW

Okay. Okay. What do I do?

COMPUTER

Do you want me to provide input?

COMMANDER HARROW

I don't know if that would help. No offense.

COMPUTER

I understand. I am not offended. I must however strongly suggest that you disregard Mission Command's direct message, which is likely a ruse, and take the original route, as my internal calculations suggest will lead to mission success.

COMMANDER HARROW

Noted. I've got some knowledge too.. I've just got figure it all out..

COMPUTER

Your knowledge is incomplete. It is doubtful that mission decisions based on it will have better success.

COMMANDER HARROW

Right. I get it. Just let me think for myself for a while. So we have up to two course corrections left?

COMPUTER

Affirmative. The original course correction is not a significant one, though it increases as we delay, in fact since the destination facility is likely a large base, it would be able to lock onto ships that are in range and tractor them into dock. On our current trajectory, we will be very near the edge of their tractor range. In fact based on this information, there is a 52% chance we will successfully dock even without changing our course.

COMMANDER HARROW

How much time do we have, exactly, to decide about course correction?

COMPUTER

12 minutes.

COMMANDER HARROW

Okay. Okay. I've got to collect my thoughts.

COMPUTER

Is that wise?

COMMANDER HARROW

Listen, you're going to wait on this decision. We obviously haven't met any mission critical threshold where you're making the decision for me so I'm going to take some time to think this one out!

COMPUTER

I understand Commander.

COMMANDER HARROW

Okay. Are there any new implications based on what I've learned?

COMPUTER

Unknown.

COMMANDER HARROW

I'm not asking you! I'm thinking to myself. Just let me do this on my own, until I talk to you again directly.

COMPUTER

Very well.

INT. MEDEVAC SHUTTLE

COMMANDER HARROW

Thanks. NOW is there anything I haven't processed yet?... Two destinations.. one from the preprogrammed mission computer.. one from a direct message.. An antenna that fixed itself.. Mission Command that seems to assume we're compromised.. if we've got an enemy drone on board that can interact with systems and remain undetected.. it

could do just about anything..

(pause)

But probably not emulate messages from mission control..

(pause)

But if we're compromised, and that was a genuine message from Mission Control, do I have any reason not to trust? They know they can kill any enemy threat that's onboard if I go to the original location right.. They definitely don't want any enemy getting through to the next stage facility - enemy contamination could compromise the entire greater mission. But they've planned for that - they should want to get me to the mission location above all - only the enemy wants me to fail. Could the enemy emulate a transmission from earth? I don't see how..

(pause)

What if the drone is space-worthy - there might even be one on our exterior - in which case it could detach, hang back while emps were activated, and then sneak back into the facility after.. but the location has the highest tech scanners to not let any foreign presence inside, so why keep me away?

(pause)

Unless the mission destination really is compromised.. it just sounds so fishy.. but what if?..

(pause)

Then it doesn't help to go there, so they're giving me an alternate.. which may not even exist.. if Mission control can't have me go to the original location, would they want to tell me

that there is no way to survive  
anywhere else.. and rather make up that  
there's a second location?.. and hang  
me out to dry.. Wouldn't it make more  
sense to send me to the compromised  
location and take our chances there?

(pause)

Or, they actually do have a secondary  
facility. One that can handle  
compromise without putting the mission  
in danger, and one that can save me..

(pause)

I just can't shake the feeling that an  
enemy is playing me?

(emotional)

How do I know what's true?

COMPUTER

Commander, the time for your decision  
making is up.

COMMANDER HARROW

I-

COMPUTER

There is less than 20 seconds of  
computer processing power remaining.

INT. MEDEVAC SHUTTLE

COMMANDER HARROW

There is no way. I don't have enough to  
go on..

COMPUTER

15 seconds

COMMANDER HARROW

I have to make my choice, blind. Damn.  
Dammit!

Dammit!

COMPUTER

10 seconds

COMMANDER HARROW

I just don't know-

What do I-

I have to-

COMPUTER

5 seconds.

COMMANDER HARROW

I-

I-

I can't-

(5 seconds is up)

COMPUTER (CON'T)

Ti-

All controls disappear. Complete darkness returns.

INT. DARKNESS

COMMANDER HARROW

I can't choose. I can't choose.

(pause)

Oh no.

(pause)

What have I done?

(pause)

No.

No!

(to God or fate)

You're just playing with me. Well you  
play with me, and you get to decide.

That's right. I've put the control back

to you.

So go ahead and squish me under your thumb..

..or just roll the dice.

What'll it be? Huh? What'll it be?

(pause)

Dammit.

(pause)

I don't even know if I'm talking to you  
- anyone.

(pause)

So here I am.. 52% I get to the original location and have a chance to complete whatever might be left of this colossal failure of a mission.

(pause)

48% chance I either drift into Jupiter, and disintegrate.. or drift off into space until my oxygen runs out.

Flip of a coin..

At least with my state.. it'll be painless...

(pause)

How could I not decide? How stupid!

I may doomed the mission. It's not even god's fault.. it's mine! My fault!

(pause)

Maybe I played into exactly what the enemy wanted.

I mean, the enemy has won if I die.. With the next stage facility compromised or not..

At least I don't have any other choices to make.

INT. DARKNESS

COMMANDER HARROW

Choices.

We make choices. Some good some bad. Some that we don't know if they're good or bad.

We're not given enough information.

What does it all mean anyway?

(pause)

I may have ruined life for a whole planet. A whole galaxy.. and I won't even know it.

(pause)

Even if I do. I end up dying and never knowing any results. The people that I'm saving or cursing - they all eventually die.

(pause)

So what does it all matter?

INT. DARKNESS

COMMANDER HARROW

Trapped. But is there anything possible for me to do, whatsoever?

Can't be.

Nothing.

Check mate.

(pause)

This enemy is diabolical and skilled.



He may have pulled off the greatest mission in history by keeping me away from my destination.

He might even be able to hear me, if it has independent power.. it was able to interact with my ear piece..

Well, Screw you.

(pause)

I wonder what they have in store?

Murder on a planetary scale?

Subjugation? Put us to work for their military complex..

Ha! - Maybe we deserve it. Maybe earth's military went out under some asinine military plan and subjugated them, because we thought we could get away with it.

Wouldn't be the first time.

Maybe we need to be defeated. Maybe we're the evil.

Evil.

Is evil really evil?

Why fight it?

It's just choice. Opportunity. Natural selection. Survival of the strong. At the expense of the weak?

But who will judge? Conscience? Isn't that a small price to pay?

What does it all mean?

(pained)

What does it all MEAN?

(pause)

But-

But that's it-

If this all meaningless - my survival is meaningless, but I don't just look for meaning, I hunger for it, deeply..

..Like a stomach hungers for food.

You can't have a stomach that hungers for food without the existence of food. A stomach couldn't have come about without food being there first.

I hunger for meaning that goes deeper than the physical, therefore it must be there.

A great origination force. An intentional one. For there to be meaning it has to be intentional. "Random" meaning isn't actually meaning, just the appearance of it, because there's nothing behind it.

But the revelation of meaning is only partial - intentionally restrained.

All of this, this insane thing called life, could be real but still a test. The great author, puts people into situations, of every kind and to every degree, to see who will win and who will succumb to the temptation of meaninglessness. And if this was a test by a greater power.. I could have won..

(pause)

..Maybe I still can.

(pause)

What does the information suggest?

What is the information I have?

(pause)

Plan.

Consciousness at the right time.

Knowledge of purpose.

Right direction - what is the right end.

So I may be a player that is meant to find something and make use of it. Like a character in a book. Sure God could do it all himself and make everything right immediately and save all the good people and eliminate the evil ones, but what if His thing is to write a story that requires the active participation of his characters to discover meaning and be the people that pass the test? I can call it stupid but He can do it the way He wants.

I should at very least, assume this, no matter the challenges I face, that way I at least have a chance of achieving the goal, otherwise despair and hopelessness is the unavoidable pit.

So what is my out?

There is an escape, and it's within my grasp, it's always within my grasp.. as hopeless it seems.

But what is it?

INT. DARKNESS

Commander Harrow hears the voice of Captain Paskal in his memory.

CAPTAIN PASKAL

(agitated)

..engine diagno-..(static and garbled voice).. something..(static and garbled voice)..power coupling.. (static and garbled voice)..-oaked technol-.. (static and garbled voice, even more agitated)..scans!.. (static and garbled voice).. -ormed mi.. (static and garbled voice).. -perative that (prolonged static)

COMMANDER HARROW

(discovering)

Oh no.

..undetectable to scans!

There is a probe on board and it's alien cloaked technology..

That antenna.

I'm a fool.

The enemy probe - think like the enemy probe -

I've just got the mission computer update and likely have the location of the next stage of the resistance plan. Perfect. Exactly what you were aiming for.

But now - you need to make sure nothing's changed, so what do you do? You fix the antenna, so that you can intercept any updates that mission control provides. I mean, certain things can be altered along the way for any number of reasons.

Then mission control sends the message. It's short and sweet - no way to tell what the truth is - but it seems like such a play would be anticipated - so it plans to go to the original location. It can't take over control, without giving itself away to diagnostics, so it takes over control of the computer voice interface device in my ear and tries to convince me to take the original location for no good reason. Just "trust me".

Damn.

This can't be real. I mean all this drama.. It's gotta be some elaborate scheme.. a construct of a maniacal creator. If it's a test, it's a terrible one and I'm going to fail.

I'm going to fail.

I'm going to die out here..

(pause)

Calm down Victor.

Finish this.

INT. DARKNESS

COMMANDER HARROW

There is something - What I know about  
the enemy and what I know about mission  
control -

Therefore I know which direction is  
wrong and which direction is right,  
and..

..if my hunch is correct, I can still  
win. All it takes is-

Commander Harrow has a silent thought. THE ANSWER.

COMMANDER HARROW (CON'T)

Yes..

Be careful Victor.. if that is actually  
my name.

No, that's probably not true at all..

Wait, I know what I should do now -  
something so clear - I have a very  
clear direction in my mind -

I was wrong to doubt the computer's  
advice. -

I'm fallible - computers have foresight  
and processing power that completely  
outscales mine -

(angry)

If only I had another chance - I would  
turn the ship to the original location  
so that we were guaranteed to get  
there. But now that's impossible -

Dammit!

Suddenly THE CONTROL DISPLAY POWERS UP AND THE CONTROLS RETURN.

COMMANDER HARROW

Ha!

Now..

Can I pull this off?

INT. MEDEVAC SHUTTLE

Commander Harrow takes quick action with the controls. Button and menu selections (as subsequently described), are made quickly and fluidly as he narrates.

COMMANDER HARROW

(to enemy)

I could infer that you had some internal back-up power you could reroute to the ship to activate computer controls. Too bad you can't control them yourself, but you need me to do that - you can affect circuits, route power to the computer, make physical repairs, even emulate the computer voice to my ear piece, but the computer software controls are all encrypted to you. Well here's the vector change.

Commander Harrow makes the selection: Change course > Enter new cords > Engage

COMPUTER

New destination entered.

Commander Harrow continues to narrate as he is "punching in" selections.

COMMANDER HARROW

I did exactly what you wanted. But you know what? It's exactly what I wanted too. And, you know, there's something interesting about the way ship's computers receive back-up power - they

store a minimum amount in a capacitor,  
so I know you can't just cut off power  
immediately.. ..And you see - that's  
your downfall.. You know that 'screw  
you'? - well here it is for real..

Commander Harrow makes the selection as he says the  
previous last line: EMP > Confirm > Yes

A 5 second countdown appears and counts down.

COMMANDER HARROW

Time to die - it's the only way to save  
this mission.

A silent \*Boom\*.

All the controls disappear yet again and darkness returns,  
this time with the knowledge that all life support is also  
destroyed.

INT. DARKNESS

COMMANDER HARROW

Well-

(pause)

There it is.

I can't believe that worked.

Hope I did the right thing.

(pause)

Yes.

It checks out.

The computer told me that the enemy  
probes had internal power reserves and  
the ability to reroute power. Made  
sense.

It was listening in to my earpiece  
communication, so it could hear my  
thoughts.

It could keep my neural interface

powered to monitor me in hopes that I might think in a way that was in line with its plan, which was to set a course to the original mission destination. Not just have a 50% chance to get there. As Captain Paskal discovered, the probe uses new technology that can't be detected, so it would be able to compromise the final destination and disrupt the greater mission.

I guess my clearly outlined fake, was convincing.

Didn't take long after it heard that, that it conveniently restored power to controls using its own power reserves.

We still had enough fuel to make the steering correction.

And I had enough time to hit the EMP.. and finish the enemy presence for good - a cloaked probe can withstand our sensors but not an electromagnetic pulse.. I ended it, but not me..

The amount of air and heat I'll have will carry me to within the reach of the facility, which the computer acknowledged had tractor capability, full scanning ability, and auto medical resources. It's a gamble, but even if I fall back into unconsciousness, I'll survive long enough to get transferred into a proper medical facility -

Hopefully.

And then -

If all things work out like the miracle this is -

Hopefully finish this thing..

Whatever this thing is..

If I miscalculated, I'll just black out



-

And either wake up in the new ship,  
or..

..whatever lies beyond this life..

INT. DARKNESS

Much time passes in darkness and silence.

Commander Harrow slowly begins losing consciousness - he  
speaks slower.

COMMANDER HARROW

I don't know why-

- but I'm feeling at peace.

(pause)

I've never been this calm, this whole  
time..

I don't know. Maybe I failed..

But I feel like I won..

No matter what happens..

I feel like I accomplished something..

Killed the bad guy..

..Saved humanity..

A close-up image of Commander Harrow's wife appears. Just  
her face, which is smiling. He's hallucinating.

HARROW'S WIFE

You did great babe.

COMMANDER HARROW

What are you doing here?

HARROW'S WIFE

I miss you.

COMMANDER HARROW

I miss you too.

HARROW'S WIFE

When are you getting home?

COMMANDER HARROW

Soon. I hope.

HARROW'S WIFE

I hope so too.

(pause)

James misses you.

COMMANDER HARROW

I miss him so much.

HARROW'S WIFE

Welcome to Javelin Base Station,  
Commander Harrow.

COMMANDER HARROW

What?

INT. DARKNESS

The vision of his wife fades away. The computer controlled audio from the docking station is being transmitted to Commander Harrow's independently powered ear piece.

ARMY COMPUTER

Pairing security checks.

(pause)

Ship scan complete. Clear of known enemy threats. Zero foreign electrical signatures.

Safety checks. Ship repair requirements registered.

Health analysis. Immediate medical assistance required.

Begin admittance protocol.

Security parameters require clearance credential.

Commander, what is your response?

COMMANDER HARROW  
My response?

ARMY COMPUTER  
Affirmative.

COMMANDER HARROW  
3-1-4 receive infinity.

There is a pause that seems like forever.

ARMY COMPUTER  
Clearance granted. Welcome to the  
Javelin, Commander Harrow.

COMMANDER HARROW  
Thanks. Good to be here.

ARMY COMPUTER  
You will be rushed to medical aid.  
Mission stage two is ready to proceed  
after you regain your health.

COMMANDER HARROW  
I don't know - anything- about that.

ARMY COMPUTER  
It will be explained.

Commander Harrow, what is your state of  
mind?

(pause)

COMMANDER HARROW  
It's good.

FADE OUT.

THE END